

Iowa Unified State Plan, FY-2018 as modified

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

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WIOA State Plan for the State of Iowa FY-2018 as modified

Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II and III of this document) where specified, as well as

the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))*
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

How State Plan Requirements Are Organized

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development

system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.

- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
 - State Strategy Implementation,
 - State Operating Systems and Policies,
 - Assurances, and
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.* States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations.

* Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

As part of the planning efforts several special committees have been established to review and make recommendations regarding serving populations with barriers to employment and the infusion of accessibility throughout the entire workforce delivery system to better support ALL Iowans in their career advancement. WIOA defines a number of populations which may experience significant barriers to employment. Iowa is no different than any other state in recognizing that many of its residents may experience difficulty gaining and maintaining employment. The State Plan outlines many of the ways that these individuals will be assisted.

Among the individuals with significant barriers to employment, the following are most notable:

Displaced Homemakers

There are 88,508 potential displaced homemakers as defined as non-wage earners living in a family setting (2014 American Community Survey).

Low-income Individuals

There are 124,355 individuals that are considered low-income, as defined by earning less than 125% of the federal poverty level wage (2014 American Community Survey). In 2014, Iowa ranked 15th among states for the percentage of people who had incomes below the poverty line, 12.2 percent or \$23,834 for a family of four, and 14.0 percent of working women, ages 18-64, had incomes below the poverty line. During the same period 14.9 percent of Iowa's children

under age 18 in related families had incomes below the poverty line, ranking Iowa 10th in the nation for child poverty. Creating real opportunities for Iowa's low-income earners to advance within the workforce system remains a priority of the workforce delivery system partners.

American Indians or Alaska Natives

There are 15,619 American Indians or Alaska Natives in the state (2014 American Community Survey).

Youth with Significant Disabilities

There are 27,352 youth that have significant disabilities (2014 American Community Survey).

Homeless Persons

There are approximately 2,314 homeless individuals,

Foster-care OOS Youth

675 youth aged out of foster care in Iowa in 2014, of this, more than 2% percent lacked a formal transition plan (IA Dept. of Children and Families)

Populations that Speak English as a Second Language

213,227 or 7.4 percent of all individuals in the state speak a language other than English at home, which may indicate limited English proficiency (2014) American Community Survey).

Working Individuals with Disability

There are 76,576 working age people with a recognized disability in Iowa and 46.5% of them are employed. This number places Iowa 3rd in the nation, behind South Dakota and North Dakota. 52.5% of the 13,600 Iowans who are blind or have vision loss are employed as are 58.5% of the 22,900 with hearing differences. Iowa must continue to focus on how to best empower more individuals with disabilities through the independence that employment provides.

Veterans

There are more than 219,006 veterans of working age (between 18 and 64) in Iowa, representing a vital, yet seriously under-utilized, workforce resource. The state's veteran population has a labor force participation rate that is on average 5 percentage points lower than the state as a whole. Twenty-six percent of veteran's experience some type of disability, a rate that is nearly twice that of the non-veteran population. The State of Iowa is committed to programs that recognize and reward veterans for the valuable skills they have to offer.

Iowa's Aging Population

The 2014 Iowa Local Employment Dynamics (LED) data reported 80,569 individuals over the age of 64 working throughout the state. Almost all (94.2 percent) of this population meet the current skill requirements of the positions they occupy. Iowans over the age of 65 make up about 16 percent of the state's population — outpacing the national average of 14 percent — according to a report published by the Administration on Aging, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In the next five years, there will be a significant number of workers eligible for retirement from the manufacturing; healthcare and social services; wholesale and retail trade; education; and public administration industries. Plans for increasing opportunities for

meaningful connection to the workforce and continued career advancement for this population is essential to Iowa's improved workforce delivery system.

Ex-Offenders (Returning Citizens)

Over 8,200 inmates were under the custody of the Iowa Department of Corrections in Iowa prisons as of December 31, 2015. An additional 28,924 are on probation/parole and 1,517 are housed in community-based residential facilities (halfway houses). Ninety-one percent of this population is male. The incarcerated population has a larger share of minority inmates than the general population and a significantly lower level of educational attainment. Programs such as the Offender Re-entry Project, Registered Apprenticeship programs and other partnerships between the Department of Corrections and the workforce development community are aimed at acquiring workforce skills which is also crucial to reducing recidivism for these individuals.

Iowa's key policy makers, Core Partners and employers recognize the value in supporting the integration of these populations into the workforce. Success will be based on how well these and other populations with barriers to employment are able to enter into and maintain permanent, family-sustaining employment. The use of career pathways, Registered Apprenticeship Programs, and a variety of other methods discussed throughout the plan will be integral in providing the necessary supports and services not only to the job-seekers, but also to employers and service providers.

I. WIOA State Plan Type

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Yes

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below. No

Combined Plan partner program(s)

Indicate which Combined State Plan partner program(s) the State is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) No

Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4))) No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)) No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) No

Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) No

Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)) No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development No

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532)) No

II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include-

i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupation

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

iii. Employers' Employment Needs

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Economic and Workforce Analysis

With the nation in a recession, Iowa's unemployment rate rose to 6.3 percent in 2010. Since taking office in 2011, Governor Terry Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds have worked with the Iowa legislature to make growing Iowa's economy a top priority. Iowa's unemployment rate fell to 3.5 percent in December, 2015 due to Iowa's strong economic growth.

With the Iowa economy once again on sound footing, Iowa's policymakers have focused on immediate and long-term economic growth that builds on Iowa's systemic economic strengths and meets current and future labor needs of Iowa employers. To that end, the Branstad-Reynolds administration commissioned comprehensive studies on Iowa's economy to help policymakers plan for the next decade.

Battelle Technology Partnership Practice

The Battelle Technology Partnership Practice report, Iowa's Re-Envisioned Economic Development Roadmap. Over an 18-month period, researchers from Battelle worked with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and regional economic development organizations around the state to conduct a comprehensive study. Battelle is the world's largest nonprofit independent research and development organization. The Technology Partnership Practice (TPP) assists local, state, and regional organizations, universities, nonprofit technology organizations, and others in designing, implementing, and assessing technology-based economic development programs. The 2014 report provides a full-scale review of Iowa's industry drivers and potential growth opportunities. It also examines how the state has fared in advancing innovation, job attraction and retention since the last roadmap was developed in 2004-2005. This third-party analysis of the state's resources, assets and existing gaps, has provided both the qualitative and quantitative foundation on which to base strategy development. The executive summary and full report can be downloaded at iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/battelle.

Georgetown Report

The Georgetown Center on Education and Workforce: "Iowa: Education and Workforce Trends Through 2025" (Georgetown Report). The Georgetown Center on Education and Workforce collaborated with the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) in support of the Branstad-Reynolds administration's objective to develop projections for long-term education goals. As part of the Iowa's talent pipeline initiative, the Georgetown Report uses "information on industry and occupational trends to identify long-term education goals and workforce development needs that will be necessary to achieve the state's economic development goals." The full report can be downloaded at: cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Iowa_Wrkfrce2025.pdf.

The Battelle and Georgetown reports, along with the most current labor market data available, form the basis of this plan’s needs assessment. The Battelle and Georgetown reports reflect that Iowa’s strengthening economy presents new challenges requiring swift and innovative solutions. Most prominently, Iowa faces a skills gap. There is a shortage of qualified workers to fill middle-skill jobs in the state. Substantial disparities exist between the number of workers able to compete for middle-skill jobs and those struggling to find low-skill jobs. This skills gap is projected to grow over the next decade. The Georgetown Report forecasts that Iowa will add more than 600,000 jobs by 2025, with approximately 225,000-about 37% of all job openings in the state through 2025-in the middle-skill variety.

A consensus is developing among Iowa policymakers around the need to up-skill Iowa jobseekers and workers in order to meet employers’ need to fill middle-skill jobs. In 2015, the Branstad-Reynolds administration launched Future Ready Iowa, an initiative which calls for 70% of Iowans to have education or training beyond high school by 2025, to help meet the demand for middle-skill employment opportunities. This initiative brings together Iowa Workforce Development, the IDOE, and the IEDA in an endeavor that goes hand-in-hand with the state’s implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Iowa’s Key Industries

Economic progress in Iowa is determined by the performance of key industries throughout the state. The industries that drive economic growth include those with global reach serving customers and markets that extend beyond local communities producing income from sources outside of Iowa. These industries can also serve to substitute for products and services that would otherwise have to be imported into the state. Industry clusters are groups of similar and related firms in a defined geographic area that share common markets, technologies, worker skill needs, and which are often linked by buyer-seller relationships.

In order to fully realize the far-reaching economic impacts of sectors and sub-sectors within regional or local economies, states must map their industry clusters and sub-sectors as well as primary sectors. Mapping should include information about occupations, worker skills, commuting patterns, and other relevant data in order to develop a focused and robust strategy for growth. Industry clusters serve as a catalyst for economic growth and include a mix of local and far-reaching goods and products which are inter-related and represent the entire supply chain and associated parts. The Battelle Report identifies twelve distinct industry clusters as driving Iowa’s economy. From the Battelle Report, **Table 1** summarizes the major industry components of these clusters and typical activities.

Industry Clusters

Table 1: Iowa’s Top 12 Industry Clusters & Associated Activities, Alphabetical

Industry Cluster	Activities
Agriculture and Food Production	Agricultural Production, Food Processing & Products Packaging

Industry Cluster	Activities
Automation & Industrial Machinery	Industrial Machinery, Metalworking Machinery & Tools, Electrical Equipment
Avionics & Communications Electronics	Search, Detection, & Navigation Instruments, Other Aerospace-related Industries
Biosciences	Agricultural Feedstock & Chemicals, “Agbiosciences”, Bioscience-related Distribution, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices & Equipment, Research, Testing, & Medical Labs
Building & Construction Products	Windows and doors (both wood and fabricated metals), Kitchen cabinets Furniture; Nonmetallic mineral products including concrete, glass, stone; plastic pipes
Heavy Machinery	Primary Ag & Construction Machinery, Manufacturing, Vehicular Parts & Components, Mobile Homes
Healthcare Services	Outpatient Care Centers, Home Healthcare, Hospitals, Nursing Care
Information Services, Digital Media & Technology	Software & Computer Services, Internet Services & E-Commerce, Multimedia Publishing
Insurance & Finance	Insurance, Commercial Banking, Securities, Commodities, & Other Financial Investments
Primary Metals Manufacturing	Iron, Steel, Aluminum, Nonferrous and Foundries
Renewable Energy	Wind Turbines, Energy Storage, Ethanol & Biofuels
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	Wholesale, Transportation, Warehousing & Storage

Source: Battelle Technology Partnership Practice, Iowa’s Re-Envisioned Economic Development Roadmap (2014).

Battelle Analysis

Due to the impacts of these particular industry clusters on Iowa’s economy, Battelle conducted a comprehensive analysis employing several economic performance measures including:

- Relative concentration of the industry cluster
- Job generation
- Relative growth of the industry cluster
- Productivity
- High-skilled jobs compared to the national average
- Average wages of the industry cluster compared to the national average
- Impacts to the local supply chain for each industry cluster

Battelle Report

Key Battelle Report Findings Impacting Iowa’s Workforce Delivery System

- Nine of the 12 industry clusters represent industry specializations in Iowa based on having a significantly higher concentration of employment relative to the national average. This reflects the competitive advantages that Iowa offers these industry clusters relative to the nation and their well-established presence in Iowa.
- Eight of the 12 industry clusters have a higher level of productivity compared to that same industry cluster nationally. This suggests that it is not simply Iowa's central location that stands out for many industries and drives the strong level of industry specialization found in Iowa, but that Iowa offers a higher value-added location. Competing on high productivity is critical in today's innovation-driven, global economy. What is particularly special about the industry clusters driving Iowa's economic growth is how extensively they outpace the nation, while the average productivity across all private sector industries in Iowa is 90 percent of the nation.
- Eight of the 12 industry clusters generated economic multipliers of more than \$500,000 for every additional \$1 million in output they generate. Led by agriculture and food production, which has an extensive footprint across Iowa and deep supply chain, there are many industry clusters in Iowa that have substantial economic multiplier impacts on the state's economy. Interestingly, the importance of high wages comes through, as the avionics and communications electronics industry cluster, with the highest average annual wages for the industry clusters in Iowa, is also among the leaders in economic impact for the state.
- Nine of the 12 industry clusters performed better in job changes than the U.S. average for that industry cluster. This is another sign that Iowa's industry clusters are more competitive than the nation. A sobering reality is that only five of the nine industry clusters performing better than the U.S. gained jobs above the 2007 pre-recession level. The other four industries outpacing the U.S. job growth from 2007-2012, declined less than in Iowa.

Table 2: Output & Employment, Iowa Top Industries, 2014

	Share of GDP	Share of Employment
Manufacturing	18	16
Healthcare & Social Assistance	7	14
Finance & Insurance	11	7
Retail Trade	6	11
Government	11	3
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	11	1
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting	7	4

Source: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/2015-12-14%20Future%20Ready%20Iowa2.pdf>

Iowa currently leads the nation in only one industry cluster, Building and Construction Products. Several industry clusters in Iowa are considerably behind the U.S. average and the remaining industry clusters in Iowa are within one to two percentage points of the national average. In general, the report concluded that the industry clusters driving Iowa's economy are healthy and have positioned the state to continue its upward track toward economic improvement through strategic job growth.

Existing Demand Industries

The Battelle Report provides a full-scale review of Iowa's industry drivers and potential growth opportunities. It also examined how the state has fared in advancing innovation, job attraction and retention since the last roadmap was developed in 2004-2005. It identifies the state's resources, assets and existing gaps, has provided both the qualitative and quantitative foundation on which to base strategy development. Some key findings identified in the report are below:

The Battelle Report takes a look at Iowa's current position, as compared to the nation and benchmarked states. Due in part to the focused work over the past several years, Iowa is faring well. Some identified successes include:

- Restructuring of IEDA and streamlining of funding programs
- Creating better private/public partnerships
- Better collaboration of stakeholders
- Improved marketing of Iowa and its assets

Iowa has made substantial economic progress over the last decade, resulting in positive trends in Iowa's top-line measures of success:

- Productivity is high -- As of 2013, Iowa's economic output, in real, inflation-adjusted terms, was 5.9% higher than the pre-recession levels of 2007, outpacing the national growth of 4.7% during the same period.
- Job growth and workforce are strong -- Iowa outperformed the nation in the growth of both middle and high-skilled jobs. At the same time, the number of low-skill jobs has actually declined as both employers and employees transition to a more skilled workforce.
- Wages are rising -- Iowa substantially outpaced national gains in private sector average wages. This is consistent with the rising workforce skill levels in Iowa and an increase in the number of higher quality jobs.
- Per capita income is growing -- While record farm incomes have driven a substantial increase in per capita income during the last decade, from 2007 to 2013, Iowa's nonfarm personal income also grew 20%, eclipsing national growth of 14% over the same period.

The Battelle Report makes recommendations for strategic priorities that Iowa must adopt to competitively position the state in a global economy. Recommendations (Strategic Priorities) include:

- Build on the competitiveness and growth of Iowa's industry clusters through innovation, retention and attraction.
- Generate and attract skilled workforce in demand by Iowa's businesses.

- Accelerate the development of Iowa's emerging entrepreneurial eco-system.
- Advance Iowa's physical infrastructure and regional development capacities to realize Iowa's economic potential.

Healthcare

The healthcare industry is essential to the health and welfare of our communities and vital to the nation's economic wellbeing, making it an ideal occupation for job-seekers to gain access to higher paying jobs through innovative programs. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP), work-based learning, and Career Pathway approaches are all well-suited to the healthcare industry. The healthcare industry is also a focus of Enhance Iowa, a statewide consortium of Iowa's 15 community colleges that is led by Hawkeye Community College and funded as part of a four-year, \$15 million grant that is part of Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT), a larger federal initiative that has issued a series of grants to community colleges across the nation for the purpose of putting people back to work. The Enhance Iowa initiative will train Iowans in the skill sets local employers need in healthcare, as well as information technology (IT), utilities, and manufacturing.

Healthcare support and nursing positions are anticipated to remain high-demand occupations, especially as more baby boomers reach retirement age. Healthcare is consistently in the top 3 largest industries in Iowa with an existing demand which is expected to grow disproportionate to the availability of matched-skilled workers available to fill healthcare positions. Healthcare accounts for 7 percent of output and 14 percent of Iowa's employment. The occupation slated to grow the most is nursing, but more than 80% of those jobs will require postsecondary training or certification. Nationally, researchers estimate that as many as 90 million low-skill workers will be at-risk for permanent joblessness by 2022. This will heighten the probability that would-be nurses from low-income and minority backgrounds will be denied access to the field beyond low-skill, low-wage positions.

Construction

The construction sector is comprised of establishments primarily engaged in the construction of buildings, engineering projects (e.g., highways and utility systems) or in the construction trades. Establishments primarily engaged in the preparation of sites for new construction or primarily engaged in subdividing land for sale as building sites are also included in this sector.

Construction work done may include new work, additions, alterations or maintenance and repairs. Activities of these establishments generally are managed at a fixed place of business, but they usually perform construction activities at multiple project sites.

In 2014, the construction sector, statewide, comprised 5.0 percent of all employment in Iowa; however, this is an industry that is sensitive to the volatilities of the business cycle, so this percentage is subject to more variation than other industries. This sector had an average annual wage of \$51,965 for 2014, which is 22.2 percent higher than the statewide average for all industries (public and private sector). In terms of employment, the construction sector was one of the hardest hit by the most recent recession. The industry shed 3,396 jobs (5.1%) between 2009 and 2010 after hemorrhaging 8,115 jobs (10.9%) between 2008 and 2009. The sector has mostly recovered since then and is nearly up to its 2006, pre-recession peak of 76,002, employing 75,697 Iowans in 2014. Construction has added 12,601 (20.0% growth) jobs since bottoming out in 2010. Wages have increased by 27.7 percent between 2006 to 2014, even though they dipped

a bit in 2009. Men make up an overwhelming majority of this industry, holding over 88.6 percent of all jobs in the sector.

In 2014, there were 9,413 construction locations across Iowa, employing 75,697 people averaged throughout the year. Construction work tends to be seasonal. The heavy & civil engineering construction subsector accounts for 16.3 percent of total covered sector employment—making it the smallest and best paid segment with average annual wage of \$63,083, construction of buildings represents 21.7 percent, and the largest sub-sector, specialty trade contractors, employs 62.0 percent of all sector employment.

Information Technology

The IT sector comprises establishments engaged in the following processes: (a) producing and distributing information and cultural products, (b) providing the means to transmit or distribute these products as well as data or communications, and (c) processing data. The main components of this sector are the publishing industries, including software publishing, the motion picture and sound recording industries, the telecommunications industries, and the information services and data processing industries.

In 2014, the IT sector provided 26,110 jobs to Iowans, which represented almost 1.7 percent of all covered employment. This sector reported an average, sector annual wage of \$50,600, which is 19.0 percent higher than the average wage across all industries (both public and private sector) of the state, \$42,536. Employment in this sector was fairly steady from 2006 through 2008, but since then has dropped precipitously, even as the recession has ended and other industries have regained the jobs they shed during the downturn. The downward trend has not proven true for the average income, which has been steadily rising. Since a recent peak in 2007, employment has decrease by 23.5 percent, while over the same period, wages increased 19.9 percent. This likely reflects the fact that the well-paid data and web industries have actually added employment as the sector as a whole has shrunk. Male workers account for a slight majority of the employees in this sector, holding 50.9 percent of the sector's jobs. Women are actually the majority of workers over the age of 45, perhaps reflecting the growing influence of male-dominated tech careers creating the new jobs in this sector.

Finance and Insurance

In 2014, the finance and insurance sector comprised 6.0 percent of all employment in Iowa (private and public sector). This high-wage sector reported an average annual wage of \$68,514 for the sector, which was 61.1 percent higher than the statewide average of \$42,536 for all industries. Since 2006, this sector has added 4,411 jobs (5.1%) and the average annual wage grew by \$14,713 (27.3%). Despite the trend of long-term growth, finance & insurance contracted slightly after the recession and lost 1,780 jobs between 2008 and 2011. However, the sector began growing again in 2012 and has since surpassed its 2008 peak. Despite the high wages relative to other industries in Iowa, wages for finance & insurance are 30 percent lower than the national average of \$97,373; however, Iowa's wages are fairly in line with other states in our region. Women make up the majority of employees in this sector holding 63.5 percent of all jobs.

This sector comprises firms primarily engaged in financial transactions (transactions involving the creation, liquidation, or change in ownership of financial assets) and/or in facilitating financial transactions. Three principal types of activities are identified: raising funds by taking deposits and/or issuing securities, pooling of risk by underwriting insurance and annuities, and

providing specialized services facilitating or supporting financial intermediation, insurance and employee benefit programs. In 2014, there was an average of 6,410 locations employing 90,499 people in the finance & insurance industries across Iowa. The majority of finance & insurance employment (94.6 percent) is represented by only two sub-sectors: insurance carriers and related activities report 46.3 percent, credit intermediation or related activities accounts for 48.3 percent of sector employees. Insurance carriers and related activities boasts a significantly higher average wage than Credit Intermediation or Related Activities, \$73,078 and \$43,756 respectively.

Agriculture

The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats. The sector distinguishes two basic activities: agricultural production and agricultural support activities. Agricultural production includes establishments performing the complete farm or ranch operation, such as farm owner-operators, tenant farm operators, and sharecroppers. Agricultural support activities include establishments that perform one or more activities associated with farm operation, such as soil preparation, planting, harvesting, and management, on a contract or fee basis.

In 2014 the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector comprised 1.3 percent of all covered employment (public and private sector) in Iowa. This sector reported an average annual wage of \$37,161 for 2014, which was 12.6 percent lower than the statewide average of \$42,536 for all industries. Employment increased every year over the period in question, even throughout the recession period. Animal production, the largest segment of this sector, employed 10,547 or 55.2 percent of all sector employment. Iowa leads the nation in the production of corn, soybeans, pork, eggs, ethanol and biodiesel. Crop production segments of this industry employed 4,871 workers in 2014; a substantial portion of sector employment in an industry that has become more reliant on machinery than labor. However, this sector still employs a large number of seasonal workers. The employment in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector does not include self-employed farmers and operations that have less than 10 workers or that have a payroll of less than \$20,000 per quarter. With over 80 percent of its land dedicated to farms, agriculture remains a vital industry in Iowa, but the long-term outlook for Iowa's ag-economy is changing. In 2014 the Iowa Ag Contribution Study was conducted to evaluate the economic significance of Iowa agriculture on the state's overall economy. The study confirmed that Iowa agriculture is directly linked to a number of industries and ag-support activities. Based on the study, reduction or removal of any one of them would likely negatively impact the others not only locally, but across the region and state. Agriculture and ag-related industries support more than 400,000 jobs across the state, which is approximately 1 in 5 workers.

According to Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey (December 31, 2015), 2015 was a record year for production of corn and soybeans in Iowa due to a near ideal growing season in much of the state. While farmers produced record corn and soybean crops, prices have continued to fall as a result of uncertainty regarding the federal Renewable Fuel Standard and large crop production worldwide. Average statewide corn prices fell from \$3.76 to \$3.48 from December 2014 to December 2015 and statewide average soybean prices fell from \$9.89 to \$8.17 over the same period. During this period there has also been a substantial drop in livestock prices. The livestock industry faced challenges as well. Fed cattle have seen the price drop from

\$161 per hundred weight down to \$116. Hogs are down from \$76 to \$49 per hundred weight. Iowa's poultry producers were at the center of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreak which resulted in the euthanizing of more than 30 million birds in Iowa during 2015. The USDA described the outbreak of 2015 as the largest animal health emergency in U.S. history.

The tighter margins seen on the farm are starting to ripple through the economy. Land prices are down 3.9 percent. There have been several announcements of layoffs at manufacturers, machinery providers, seed companies, and other businesses that serve the agriculture industry. Coupled with a softening global demand and a strong dollar there have been overall significant impacts on Iowa's economy.

Toward the Future

Iowa will support the broadening of career pathways available to job-seekers which result in attainment of industry recognized credentials and sustainable employment. Registered Apprenticeship programs result in increased chances for upward mobility, increased pay, and job stability. Iowa's vision for the future of workforce services includes increasing the number of partner-employers that employ apprentices in the healthcare and other leading industries.

Table 3: Occupations with the most job growth, 2014-2024, Projected, Numbers in Thousands

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Change 2014-24	Number	Percent	Median annual wage, 2014
Total, all occupations	00-0000	150,539.9	160,328.8	9,788.9	6.5	\$35,540
Personal care aides	39-9021	1,768.4	2,226.5	458.1	25.9	\$20,440
Registered nurses	29-1141	2,751.0	3,190.3	439.3	16.0	\$66,640
Home health aides	31-1011	1,913.5	1,261.9	348.4	38.1	\$21,380
Food preparation and serving workers	35-3021	3,159.7	3,503.2	343.5	10.9	\$18,410
Retail salespersons	41-2031	4,624.9	4,939.1	314.2	6.8	\$21,390
Nursing assistants	31-1014	1,492.1	1,754.1	262.0	17.6	\$25,100
Customer service representatives	43-4051	2,581.8	2,834.8	252.9	9.8	\$31,200
Cooks, restaurant	35-2014	1,109.7	1,268.7	158.9	14.3	\$22,490
General and operations managers	11-1021	2,124.1	2,275.2	151.1	7.1	\$97,270
Construction laborers	47-2061	1,159.1	1,306.5	147.4	12.7	\$31,090
Accountants and auditors	13-2011	1,332.7	1,475.1	142.4	10.7	\$65,940
Medical assistants	31-9092	591.3	730.2	138.9	23.5	\$29,960

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Change 2014-24	Number	Percent	Median annual wage, 2014
Janitors and cleaners, excluding maids/housekeepers	37-2011	2,360.6	2,496.9	136.3	5.8	\$22,840
Software developers, applications	15-1132	718.4	853.7	135.3	18.8	\$95,510
Laborers and freight, stock, hand- movers	53-7062	2,441.3	2,566.4	125.1	5.1	\$24,430
First-line supervisors of office and admin workers	43-1011	1,466.1	1,587.3	121.2	8.3	\$50,780
Computer systems analysts	15-1121	567.8	686.3	118.6	20.9	\$82,710
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	29-2061	719.9	837.2	117.3	16.3	\$42,490
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	37-2012	1,457.7	1,569.4	111.7	7.7	\$20,120
Medical secretaries	43-6013	527.6	635.8	108.2	20.5	\$32,240
Management analysts	13-1111	758.0	861.4	103.4	13.6	\$80,880
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	53-3032	1,797.7	1,896.4	98.8	5.5	\$39,520
Receptionists and information clerks	43-4171	1,028.6	1,126.3	97.8	9.5	\$26,760
Office clerks, general	43-9061	3,062.5	3,158.2	95.8	3.1	\$28,670
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	41-4012	1,453.1	1,546.5	93.4	6.4	\$55,020
Stock clerks and order fillers	43-5081	1,878.1	1,971.1	92.9	4.9	\$22,850
Market research analysts and marketing specialists	13-1161	495.5	587.8	92.3	18.6	\$61,290
First-line supervisors of food prep/serving workers	35-1012	890.1	978.6	88.5	9.9	\$29,560
Electricians	47-2111	1,628.8	714.7	85.9	13.7	\$51,110
Maintenance and repair workers, general	49-9071	1,374.7	1,458.1	83.5	6.1	\$36,170

Data obtained from the Occupational Employment Statistics program, U.S. Department of Labor,
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Iowa's Emerging Demand Industries

Iowa continues to expand on its long tradition of agricultural and manufacturing excellence. Both of these industries have served as a springboard for continued industry development in a broad range of areas. Today, Iowa continues to lead the way in advanced manufacturing, value-added

agriculture and food production; and is also in the forefront of innovation in renewable energy and fuels; information and communications technology; and distribution and warehousing. Iowa's emerging industry sectors and occupations are addressed individually in the following section.

Agriculture and Food Production

Iowa is tops in the country in producing pork, soybeans, corn and eggs, according to the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG). Iowa farmers also are leaders in the turkey and dairy industries as well as the bio-based products sector. This sector is comprised of firms engaged in mechanical, physical or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products. Firms are often described as plants, factories, or mills and typically use power-driven machines and materials-handling equipment. However, firms that transform materials or substances into new products by hand and those engaged in selling to the general public such as bakeries, candy stores, and custom tailors. In all, Iowa is responsible for more than seven percent of America's food supply.

Renewable Energy

Located between the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers, Iowa has few fossil energy resources but has significant renewable energy potential. Iowa's climate, with rainfall in the growing season and dry air at harvest, together with the state's rich soils produce abundant grain crops. The state leads the nation in the production of both corn and ethanol made from corn. Iowa's open fields gives the state an unobstructed wind resource that is ranked seventh in the nation. With its many days of sunshine each year, Iowa has the potential to increase solar energy as an untapped renewable energy resource.

Iowa is the 30th most densely populated state in the nation but, because of its energy-intensive economy, the state ranks 5th in total energy use per person. Industry, which includes agriculture and biofuels production in addition to manufacturing, is Iowa's major energy-consuming sector. Transportation is the state's second largest energy-consuming sector. The residential sector, where the majority of households heat with natural gas, consumes less energy than all but the commercial sector. Following the release of the Battelle Report, the State of Iowa began investigation into traded clusters to find the emerging opportunities. The renewable chemical industry is one of those emerging sectors due to Iowa's natural and available resources.

"Iowa owns the bio-fuels space. We are first in ethanol production and second in biodiesel, but that is a commodity," Debbie Durham says. "Iowa needed to think like a petroleum company. We needed to look at our existing industry and discover a way to harvest high-value chemicals from it."

To that end, Iowa officials brought together industry experts and researchers from Iowa State University, tested the idea, and drafted the legislation to provide a production tax credit for renewable chemicals. As a result, Iowa will be the first state to market with a fully refundable bio-production tax credit for 30-plus bio-chemicals that can be harvested from the rich fuel stream in Iowa.

Iowa is among the top three states with the highest percentages of total in-state electricity generation from non-hydroelectric renewable energy resources. Wind is the dominant renewable resource used in Iowa. The state is second only to Texas in electricity generation from wind

turbines. Most of Iowa's abundant wind energy is harnessed in the northern and western parts of the state. Hydroelectric power is also used for electricity generation in Iowa. It contributes less than 2% to the state's total net electricity generation. A small amount of electricity is also generated from biomass.

Iowa is the leading ethanol-producing state in the nation and has the second-largest biodiesel production capacity after Texas. Iowa's plentiful cornfields provide the feedstock for the state's more than 40 ethanol plants. Iowa's ethanol plants have a combined productive capacity of about 3.7 billion gallons per year. Iowa also has cellulosic ethanol plants that use agricultural waste including corn stover (the stalk, leaf, cob, and husk left after harvest) or corn kernel fiber. An existing corn ethanol plant is converting to a cellulosic ethanol plant that processes municipal solid waste. Iowa also has about a dozen biodiesel plants with a combined production capacity of about 330 million gallons per year, according to a report published by the US Energy Administration, Iowa Profile. For more information, go to <http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=IA>.

Iowa's energy policies and regulations promote energy efficiency and renewable resources. In addition to several energy efficiency standards, the Mandatory Utility Green Power Option requires all electric utilities operating in Iowa, including those not rate-regulated by the Iowa Utilities Board, to offer green power options to their customers. State regulations also require Iowa's two investor-owned utilities to own or to contract for a combined total of 105 megawatts of renewable generating capacity and associated production from generating facilities designated by the utilities and approved by the Iowa Utilities Board. Iowa is a natural place for this industry to progress due to its abundant supply of the one raw material most needed by the renewable chemical sector, agricultural sugar.

Advanced Manufacturing

Advanced manufacturing is Iowa's largest industry, contributing \$25 billion annually to the state's economy. With nearly 4,000 manufacturing establishments employing over 210,000 people, Iowa continues to supply cutting-edge, innovative products in a myriad of industry sectors. Iowa's top performing industry divisions hold a pre-eminent position in the United States. Industrial metal processing, automation precision machinery, environment control systems, digital and electronic devices and power generation equipment are highly specialized, surpassing the national trend. Other key industries include:

- Aerospace and defense
- Industrial chemicals
- Construction components
- Commercial and industrial motor vehicles
- Food and food ingredients
- Printing and packaging
- Medical drugs and devices

In 2014, manufacturing supplied 216,887 jobs to Iowans, which represented 14.3 percent of all employment (both public and private sector). This sector had an average annual wage of \$54,401. This is 27.9 percent higher than the statewide average of \$42,536 for all industries. The manufacturing sector was hit hard by the most recent recession, shedding 26,621 jobs between 2008 and 2010 (11.7%). Manufacturing has added 16,105 jobs since 2010 (8.0%) but still

remains 10,516 jobs below its pre-recession employment level, for net job losses of 4.6 percent between 2008 and 2014. Despite the large drop in employment, wages have continued to rise. Wages have grown every year since 2006, even through the recession. Wages have grown 22.6 percent since 2006, increasing from \$44,357 to \$54,401 over the same period. Men hold 72.9 percent of all industry jobs in Iowa.

Of Iowa's 99 counties, 32% are classified as manufacturing dependent, and this is especially true in the effected regions. Iowa currently has over 6,000 Advanced Manufacturing careers, with average pay of over \$51,000/year. The Advanced Manufacturing industry is Iowa's leading contributor to the state's economy, bringing in more than the agriculture industry, even though Iowa is America's largest producer of corn, soybeans, pigs, and eggs (Source: Iowa Economic Development). With more than \$13.3 billion worth of manufactured and value-added goods shipped out of the country, manufacturing accounts for 88 percent of Iowa's total exports. Since 2001, Iowa manufacturing exports have grown by 179 percent - nearly 73 percent more than the nation as a whole.

Services Industries

Iowa's services industry is responsible for creating over 33 percent of the Hawkeye State's jobs, according to the IEDA. This workforce includes wholesale and retail trade, insurance and healthcare. With such a diversity of occupations in the general "services" industry, the accommodation and food services and the general services industries are included in this section.

Accommodation and Food Services

In 2014, the accommodation and food services sector comprised 7.9 percent of all employment (public and private sector) in Iowa with 120,322 jobs and an annual average wage of \$14,418. Although this wage is 66.1 percent lower than the statewide average of \$42,536 for all industries, there is a greater ratio of part-time employment in addition to lower hourly rates than other industries. The average wage does not include tips or gratuities earned by wait staff, bell hops, and bartenders that are not reported to their employers. Employment in this sector has recovered well since reaching its recession-low in 2010. Accommodation and food services has grown nearly 8.2 percent since the lowest employment of 111,206 jobs in 2010 and surpassed the pre-recession high of 117,590 employees from 2007. After remaining fairly flat through the recession, wages have also increased in recent years. Also, since 2010, annual wages increased from \$12,668 to \$14,418 or 13.8 percent. This industry typically employs the most young workers and those who have the greatest barriers to self-sufficiency in Iowa. In 2013, the most recent year available, 30.7 percent of the sector's workers were between the ages of 14 and 21. Females accounted for 57.8 percent of all workers. This sector is comprised of firms that provide customers with lodging and/or prepare meals, snacks and beverages for immediate consumption. The sector includes both accommodation and food services since they are often combined.

Other Services

The other services (except public administration) sector consists of establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided for elsewhere in the classification system. Establishments in this sector are primarily engaged in activities such as equipment and machinery repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, grant-making, advocacy, and other personal care services.

In March 2014, there were 9,037 locations in Iowa classified in the other services, which employ 44,879 people. This sector consists of many small companies, averaging less than 5 employees per establishment. There are a variety of services represented in this sector, including occupations such as barber shops, auto mechanics, political parties, and nannies. The largest sub-sector is automotive repair and maintenance, representing 35.2 per cent of the employment in this industry. The smallest sub-sector is private households, which represent 9.2 percent of employment.

In 2014, the other services sector comprised 3.0 percent of all employment (both public and private sector) in Iowa, providing the state 44,879 jobs, with an average annual wage of \$28,770 that was 32.4 percent lower than the statewide average of \$42,536 for all industries. This wage rate is pretty on par for the region, although it is 15.2 percent lower than the national average for this sector. Employment has grown fairly steadily since 2006, even adding jobs during the deepest recession years of 2009 and 2010. Some of the growth was offset between 2012 and 2013 when some establishments providing home health care to individuals was reclassified from private households in this sector to individual and family services sub-sector in the health care and social assistance industries, classified under the health care sector. Since 2006, this sector has added 3,113 jobs, growing by 7.5 percent. Wages have also been steadily increasing, up 24.6 percent over the same period. Keep in mind, however, that these numbers are somewhat distorted by the reclassification outlined above. Women somewhat outnumber men in this sector, especially amongst workers under age 35.

The state is also home to a growing telecommunications sector thanks largely to the Iowa Network Services (INS) statewide fiber-optic network that provides connectivity across the state. These services enable businesses to stay connected from virtually anywhere — even the most remote rural areas. And the numbers are steadily growing. In addition, major industry sectors such as finance, insurance and manufacturing rely on information technology to compete in today's global economy. Nearly 55,000 high-tech workers in all firms support Iowa's economy - across technology and non-technology industries.

Information and Communications Technology

In recent years, Iowa has attracted new investments from IT companies, including IBM, Google, Facebook and Microsoft data centers. The technology industry employs over 76,000 workers and accounts for \$10.696 billion (8.8%) of the state's GDP. In 2014, the information sector provided 26,110 jobs to Iowans, which represented almost 1.7 percent of all covered employment. This sector reported an average, sector annual wage of \$50,600, which is 19.0 percent higher than the average wage across all industries (both public and private sector) of the state, \$42,536.

Employment in this sector was fairly steady from 2006 through 2008, but since then has dropped precipitously, even as the recession has ended and other industries have regained the jobs they shed during the downturn. The downward trend has not proven true for the average income, which has been steadily rising. Since a recent peak in 2007, employment has decreased by 23.5 percent, while over the same period, wages increased 19.9 percent. This likely reflects the fact that the well-paid data and web industries have actually added employment as the sector as a whole has shrunk. Male workers account for a slight majority of the employees in this sector, holding 50.9 percent of the sector's jobs. Women are the majority of workers over the age of 45, perhaps reflecting the growing influence of male-dominated tech careers creating the new jobs in this sector.

The information sector comprises establishments engaged in the following processes: (a) producing and distributing information and cultural products, (b) providing the means to transmit or distribute these products as well as data or communications, and (c) processing data. The main components of this sector are the publishing industries, including software publishing, the motion picture and sound recording industries, the telecommunications industries, and the information services and data processing industries.

Information Sector

The information sector consists of 1,683 units, employing 26,110 works in 2014. The largest subsector is publishing industries (except internet) with 476 establishments (28.3 percent of the industry's total) and 8,630 employees (33.1 percent of the industry's total). Telecommunications and data processing, hosting, and related services also make up a significant portion of this sector (25.9 and 22.5 percent respectively). After holding steady for a few years, employment in this sector began to contract in 2009, and the sector continued to shed jobs every year since then. At the same time, wages have grown steadily, bolstered by employment growth in the well-paid data processing, hosting, and related services. Note that many other information technology jobs are classified in the Professional & Technical Services sector.

Distribution and Warehousing

Iowa is in the middle of the United States. Sitting in the center of an eight-state market of nearly one million businesses and thirty-five million people, Iowa's Midwest location offers a distinct advantage to businesses with both domestic and international markets and suppliers. There are 4,105 transportation and warehousing establishments in Iowa with \$5 billion in sales, employing 56,775 people.

Iowa offers particular geographic and tax advantages for distribution and warehousing. With three Interstate highways (I-35, I-80 and I-29) and a network of secondary highways systems, nearly 4,000 miles of rail freight track, statewide airport coverage and 60 barge terminals that ship and receive, Iowa provides efficient and cost-effective transportation options.

It is projected by the Bureau of Economic Analysis that the warehousing and distribution industry in Iowa contributes approximately \$5 billion to Iowa's gross domestic product. There are approximately 4,632 transportation and warehousing establishments in Iowa with \$5 billion in sales, employing 64,480 people.

- Iowa's roadway system ranks 12th in the nation, with 113,377 miles of highway. Each year \$300 billion in goods are shipped to and from Iowa. Trucks originating in Iowa can reach 83 million people within one day's drive and 252 million people within two days' drive. Freight and rail shipments can reach vital markets like Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Omaha and Kansas City in just a few short hours.
- Iowa has 108 publicly-owned airports, including 8 that offer commercial air service. These facilities annually accommodate 2.5 million passengers and transport 175 million pounds of cargo.
- Iowa is crisscrossed by nearly 4,000 miles of rail freight track, used by 19 freight carriers to carry over 259.3 million tons of freight throughout the state to other destinations. Iowa also has two transcontinental Amtrak passenger routes.

- The 491 miles of inland waterways in Iowa carry more than 12 million tons of freight each year.
- General refrigerated storage (public/private units) in Iowa totals nearly 80 million gross cubic ft.

Emerging Occupations

Iowa's fastest growing occupational data was retrieved from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and is displayed in Table 4. Information contained in the table varies slightly when compared to the Battelle report and data reported by Iowa Workforce Development. The discrepancies are based on several factors: differences in data collection methods, date ranges, industry or occupational classification, projection methods used and reporting periods. As part of ongoing planning, data collection methods, reporting periods, and type of data collected will be reviewed for opportunities to enhance consistency. In order to reach the degree of alignment and integration envisioned by the Branstad-Reynolds Future Ready Iowa initiative and WIOA in order to provide services and activities that meet current and future labor-market needs, it is imperative that Iowa policymakers are using the most up-to-date and accurate data, as well as the same methods of classification, reporting, and projection.

Table 4: Fastest growing occupations, 2014 and projected 2024, Numbers in Thousands

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Employment, 2024	Change 2014-2024, Number	Change 2014-2024, Percent	Median Ann. Wage, 2014
Total, all occupations	00-0000	150,539.9	160,328.8	9,788.9	6.5	\$35,540
Wind turbine service technicians	49-9081	4.4	9.2	4.8	108.0	\$48,800
Occupational therapy assistants	31-2011	33.0	47.1	14.1	42.7	\$56,950
Physical therapist assistants	31-2021	78.7	110.7	31.9	40.6	\$54,410
Physical therapist aides	31-2022	50.0	69.5	19.5	39.0	\$24,650
Home health aides	31-1011	913.5	1,261.9	348.4	38.1	\$21,380
Commercial divers	49-9092	4.4	6.0	1.6	36.9	\$45,890

2014 National Employment Matrix (NEM) Title	NEM Code	Employment, 2014	Employment, 2024	Change 2014-2024, Number	Change 2014-2024, Percent	Median Ann. Wage, 2014
Total, all occupations	00-0000	150,539.9	160,328.8	9,788.9	6.5	\$35,540

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Wind turbine service technicians	49-9081	4.4	9.2	4.8	108.0	\$48,800
Occupational therapy assistants	31-2011	33.0	47.1	14.1	42.7	\$56,950

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Total, all occupations	00-0000	150,539.9	160,328.8	9,788.9	6.5	\$35,540
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Occupational therapy assistants	31-2011	33.0	47.1	14.1	42.7	\$56,950

Battelle Highlights

IEDA Director Durham refers to the following guiding principles which emerged from the Battelle report as being transformational to Iowa's economy and workforce in coming years:

- Implementation of appropriate measures of economic success which go beyond traditional measures of jobs and economic activity and include the quality of jobs and improvements in living standards for workers.

- Iowa's major industry clusters are driving increased economic performance and will remain critical to economic growth in the future.
- Balance and integration are keys to economic development planning, especially those that focus on innovation, retention and attraction.
- The state must provide support and resources sufficient to impact key areas such as workforce, innovation, entrepreneurship, broadband, transportation infrastructure and business climate.

Employer's Employment Needs

Prior to the authorization of WIOA, Iowa was taking steps to improve its workforce delivery system by developing and implementing programs that increase the capacity of the workforce to meet the needs of employers. Offering opportunities for workers to receive specialized training and to engage hands-on learning will increase workers' value and appeal to current and future employers.

Middle-Skill Jobs

Middle-skill jobs as those that generally require some significant education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree. These postsecondary education or training requirements can include associate's degrees, vocational certificates, significant on-the-job training, previous work experience, or generally "some college" less than a bachelor's degree. In some of the analysis (especially when we using BLS projections for occupational growth over the coming decade), BLS estimates of the demand for education and training in detailed occupational categories. But, when analyzing recent trends and future projections in broad occupational categories, skills are divided into high-skill, middle-skill, and low-skill subcategories based on the average educational attainments and/or training of people in those jobs. Accordingly:

- High-skill occupations tend to be those in the professional/technical and managerial categories.
- Low-skill occupations tend to be those in the service and agricultural categories.
- Middle-skill occupations are the others, including clerical, sales, construction, installation/repair, production, and transportation/material moving.

These skill categories reflect only average skill demands within broad occupational categories. Some detailed occupations within the technical and managerial categories require less than a bachelor's degree, some in the middle categories might require only high school, and some in the service category may require more than high school. There are notable disparities among Iowa's workers in terms of skills. Information provided by LMI Division, Iowa Workforce Development, in 2015 supported the belief that middle-skill jobs remain a fundamental element of Iowa's current and future economy. According to *Middle Skill Jobs in Iowa*, a publication prepared by the Labor Market Information Division (LMI) of Iowa Workforce Development, a significant challenge Iowa faces is a shortage of qualified workers to fill middle-skill jobs. Substantial disparities exist between the number of workers able to compete for middle-skill jobs and those struggling to find low-skill jobs. In Iowa, 34% of available workers possess low-skills, while workers with middle-skills represent 32% of the workforce. Only 12% of available jobs seek workers with low skill-sets while numerous middle-skill jobs remain unfilled. In fact, 55% of jobs require at least mid-level skills. Targeting workers with low-skills for transition to middle-skill jobs is a critical step-forward in minimizing the skill-gap.

Further, helping Iowans up-skill to meet middle-skill job demands will help workers earn better wages. The average annual wage paid to employees whose jobs require only low-skills - skills that can be learned or acquired within 30 days without prior training - is only \$22,605. This is 40.7% lower than the Iowa statewide average of \$38,120 for all industries. Meanwhile, middle-skill workers in Iowa are earning a mean wage of \$35,000 - \$60,000 annually. Occupations at the higher-end of the pay range can be found in business and financial operations; healthcare; construction and extraction; and installation, maintenance and repair.

Iowa has a well-documented need for workers with at least middle-level skills and that need is expected to continue to rise in the next few years. Low and middle skill jobs are expected to remain fairly constant and in equilibrium with sufficient numbers of appropriately matched-skill workers to fill current and future jobs. A variety of methodologies and approaches exists in relation to defining work-skills, but it is generally accepted that low-skills are entry-level, non-credentialed skills.

LMI provided a list of skills that employers reported are needed by applicants for open positions. Basic skills include literacy, numeracy, and the abilities to locate and read for information. More than one-fifth (20.9%) of employers in all of the sectors surveyed feel that applicants need basic skills needed for the job, along with Written communication, 50%; Reading for Information, 43%; Mathematics, 39% and Locating Information, 26%.

Soft-Skills

Soft skills that employers reported were needed by applicants for open positions include skills that are well suited to working with others. Nearly one-third (29.9%) of employers in all sectors surveyed reported applicants required soft skills. Soft skills commonly include Motivation, Dependability, Communication Skills, Time-Management, Teamwork, Leadership and Honesty.

Occupational Skills

Occupational skills needed by applicants are typically the technical and know-how skills that apply directly to a job, often referred to as “hard skills” and are primarily job-specific. Nearly two-fifths (37.1%) of employers surveyed believed applicants lacked occupational skills. Other Hard-skills noted by employers as needed by applicants included: Analytical Thinking, Business Communication, Machine Operation, Basic Computer Literacy, Project Management, and Computer

Upon receipt of information concerning occupational skill needs by employers, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) began developing strategies to create opportunities for IVRS job candidates to learn the necessary problem-solving skills to work. While this is currently in development, it is being planned for and will continue to be addressed through a variety of methods including third party contracting for service, direct service provision by IVRS staff, and coordination with a multitude of workforce system partners. In regard to hiring processes, nearly half (46.1%) of the employers reported giving preference to applicants that had obtained certifications for the vacant positions. In addition, 38.7% of respondents indicated they give applicants with veteran status preference in hiring.

With Iowa’s current shortage of middle- and high-skilled workers, it is critical that the state develop strategies that will draw workers and connect them with available middle- and high-skill jobs. Strong gains across a broad range of occupations at both the middle- and higher-skill levels in Iowa demonstrates Iowa’s ability to grow middle- and high-skilled jobs and is a strong indicator of how well the economy has performed in recent years, despite the economic recession and slow economic recovery. Employer-driven policies, supports and industry-focused solutions will prepare a dynamic and Future Ready workforce to meet the challenges of the future. Innovative strategies that are business-driven and increase the skills, talents, and abilities of the workforce will prepare workers to meet the demands of tomorrow’s jobs. The Future Ready Iowa initiative seeks to meet this need by equipping 70% of Iowans with education and training beyond high school. Acceptable credentials, education or experience for most Middle-skill jobs include:

- High School Diploma + Moderate to Long-Term On-the-job Training
- High School Diploma + Registered Apprenticeship
- Postsecondary non-degree award
- Some College, no degree

- Associate's Degree

Iowa's In-Demand and Emerging Industries

Using LMI data and resources, some of Iowa's top industry clusters are outlined below along with the standard educational, experiential, training, and skillset requirements.

Table 5: Iowa's Top Industry Clusters & Associated Education, Skills, & Training (AST)

Industry Cluster	Credential	AST
Agriculture and Food Production	AS,	A, M, S
Automation & Industrial Machinery	PS	A, N
Avionics & Communications Electronics	HS, PS, BA	A, N, I
Biosciences	DP	A, N
Building & Construction Products	HS, PS	A, N, M
Heavy Machinery	HS	A, M
Healthcare Services	BA, MA, HS	A, N
Information Services, Digital Media & Technology	AS, BA, SC	A, N
Insurance & Finance	HS, BA, PS	A, M, S, N
Metals Manufacturing	HS	A, M
Renewable Energy	BA, DP	A, N
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	HS	A, N, S

Key: Career Preparation determined by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Alternative employment pathways may exist as well as differing educational, training, or licensing requirements per state. Iowa requirements are used if/when available. Career Preparation areas/levels include: Education (typical education level needed to enter an occupation): DP = Doctoral or Professional degree; MA = Master's degree; BA = Bachelor's degree; AS = Associate's degree; PS = Postsecondary non-degree award; SC = Some college, no degree; HS = High school diploma or equivalent; < HS = Less than high school; Work Experience (typical work experience level commonly considered necessary for entry into an occupation, or substitutable for formal types of training): > 5 = 5 years or more; < 5 = Less than 5 years; N = None; and Job Training (typical on-the-job training level needed to attain occupational competency): I = Internship/residency; A = Apprenticeship; L = Long-term on-the-job training; M = Moderate-term on-the-job training; S = Short-term on-the-job training; None = N. Source: 2012-2022 State Of Iowa Occupational Projections, LMI, IWD 2014

In consideration of all the available data resources and public and private analyses which have been conducted around Iowa's changing economic and workforce landscape, indicators point

towards the need for a robust and available workforce. The Unified State Plan, as developed in cooperation and collaboration between the required and many optional partners, forms the foundation on which Iowa's Future Ready Workforce will grow and be further developed. In order to achieve the highest potential for success for ALL of Iowa's workers, including those with barriers to employment and the youth populations, the state will need to create opportunities to connect all facets of the workforce: employers, job-seekers, providers, and others in meaningful and lasting ways. Through the incorporation of best practices which are business-driven and benefit current and future job-seekers, mutually agreed upon goals will be achieved.

B. Workforce Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups** in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. ** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

i. Employment and Unemployment

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

ii. Labor Market Trends

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

iv. Skill Gaps

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

Employment and Unemployment

Iowa's pre-recession employment level was 1.66 million. So the economy first has to recover the jobs it lost in the recession before going on to add additional opportunities for unemployed workers and new entrants into the workforce. Iowa's statewide annual average unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 percent in 2014 from 4.7 percent in 2013. At the same time, the U.S. rate for unemployment also improved, dropping to 6.2 percent in 2014 from 7.4 percent in 2013. Iowa

and Hawaii tied for the ninth-lowest unemployment rate in the nation. The number of unemployed persons in Iowa averaged 74,000 in 2014, down from 78,200 in 2013.

Men accounted for 60 percent of the unemployed in Iowa in 2014, compared to women who made up 40 percent. Minorities and youth continued to experience the highest rates of unemployment: Blacks or African Americans (14.1 percent), youth 16 to 19 years of age (12.0 percent), and Hispanics (8.5 percent). Workers with less education also continued to experience a higher unemployment rate than better educated individuals: those with less than a high school diploma (10.9 percent), high school graduates with no college (5.8 percent), those with some college or associate's degree (4.6 percent), and those with a Bachelor's degree or higher (2.1 percent).

The July 2015 labor statistics show that an 11 percent unemployment rate for persons with disabilities while persons without disabilities had a 4.8 percent unemployment rate. This is a significant discrepancy that the core partners will address as the collaborative work continues, and the unemployment rate for this population declines, the outcome will demonstrate the system improvements expected with the WIOA Unified State Plan.

Unemployment insurance benefits paid and average duration continued to trend downward in the wake of the recession. The total weeks compensated for unemployment insurance decreased by 7.2 percent versus 2013. Average duration of benefits dipped to 12.9 weeks from 13.7 in 2013. These levels peaked for Iowa in 2009 when the average duration of benefits were 15.6 weeks paid and 2.6 million weeks were compensated—over twice the amount paid in 2014. Recent benefit amounts now trend near pre-recession levels.

Employment Statistics

Table 6: Iowa Employment Statistics

Labor Force Statistics	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Employment	1,566,100	1,560,800	1,555,500	1,644,500
Total Unemployment	81,800	72,600	63,400	60,300
Percent Unemployed	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.5

Information obtained from LMI, IWD, 2015.

Iowa's long term unemployment also eased somewhat in 2014, down to 18.8 percent of total unemployment from 21.1 percent in 2013. Unemployment rates in all nine of the state's metropolitan statistical areas (MSA's) and most rural counties decreased in 2014. The Ames MSA experienced the lowest rate of the nine major labor market areas at 2.9 percent; Davenport-Moline-Rock Island MSA was the highest at 6.3 percent. Jobless rates for Iowa's 99 counties ranged from a low of 2.6 percent in Lyon to a high of 6.3 percent in Lee.

For the Program Year 2014 (PY14), the Dislocated Worker Entered Employment rate resulted in 69.1%. The target rate for program year 2014 was 70% however this result was within the

minimum target rate of 80% of the negotiated goal of 56.0%. Dislocated Worker Entered Employment accounts for individuals employed in the 1st quarter after exit quarter.

Vacancy Data

Table 7 shows reported vacancies by occupational category. The vacancy data reflects data captured between October 31, 2013 and November 30, 2014. The majority of vacancies are within the sales and related, office and administrative support; transportation and material moving; healthcare practitioner and technical; production; and food preparation and serving related occupational categories. The categories are clustered using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system.

Among the employers who responded to the survey, 2,984 (31.0%) reported having one or more current or anticipated job vacancies, while 6,643 respondents (69.0%) reported having no job vacancies. There is an average of 34,378 job vacancies per day reported by employers across Iowa. The majority of reported vacancies exist in positions that typically require some training beyond high school or in middle-skill jobs. Of employers that responded with job vacancies, 41.3% were businesses with 10 or fewer employees, 51.2% had between 11 and 99 employees and 7.5% had 100 employees or more. While large employers only accounted for 7.5% of the survey responses, nearly half (47.2%) of the total job vacancies in the state were with large employers. During the same period of time the average ratio of unemployed persons for every vacant position was 1.7%. Vacancy data reflects data captured between October 31, 2013 and November 30, 2014. The majority of vacancies are within the sales and related, office and administrative support; transportation and material moving; healthcare practitioner and technical; production; and food preparation and serving related occupational categories.

Table 7: Iowa's Current Vacancies, by Category

Category	% of Total	Vacancies per Day (average)
Sales & Related	11.6%	3,994
Office & Administrative Support	11.0%	3,779
Transportation & Material Moving	10.6%	3,643
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	8.3%	2,847
Production	7.5%	2,593
Food Preparation & Serving Related	6.8%	2,333
Computer & Mathematical Science	5.5%	1,887
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	4.9%	1,696
Management	4.8%	1,640
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	4.3%	1,480

Category	% of Total	Vacancies per Day (average)
Business & Financial Operations	3.7%	1,287
Construction & Extraction	3.6%	1,221
Healthcare Support	3.5%	1,205
Architecture & Engineering	3.0%	1,047
Community & Social Science	2.1%	720
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	2.0%	683
Education, Training & Library	1.9%	639
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Related	1.5%	504
Protective Service	1.1%	386
Personal Care & Service	1.1%	366
Life, Physical & Social Science	1.0%	355
Legal	0.1%	45
Military Specific	0.1%	28
Total	100%	34,378

Note: Totals may vary due to rounding methods. Source: Iowa Workforce Development's Job Bank

Notable Subgroups

There are a number of subgroups that face more significant barriers to employment and therefore require enhanced services such as those envisioned under WIOA. Among these groups are individuals with disabilities, veterans, and the incarcerated population. Each of these groups experience unemployment rates that are significantly higher than those of the general population. They also represent vital resources that the state will need to utilize in order to help counteract the workforce quantity and quality challenges. **Table 8** provides the overview of Iowa's general population and demographic characteristics.

Table 8: Population & Demographic Characteristics

Population Characteristics	Iowa	Des Moines	Cedar Rapids	Davenport	Sioux City	Iowa City
Population, July 1, 2015	3123899	209220	129195	102448	82517	73415
Persons under 18 years, %	23.9	24.8	23.5	24.0	26.6	14.9

Population Characteristics	Iowa	Des Moines	Cedar Rapids	Davenport	Sioux City	Iowa City
Persons 65 years and over, %	15.8	11.0	13.1	12.6	12.4	8.2
Female persons, %	50.5	51.1	50.9	51.3	50.8	50.3
White alone, %	92.1	76.4	88.0	80.7	80.6	82.5
Black or African American alone, %	3.4	10.2	5.6	10.8	2.9	5.8
American Indian & Alaska Native alone, %	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	2.6	0.2
Asian alone, %	2.2	4.4	2.2	2.2	2.7	6.9
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone, %	0.1	0.1	0.1	<0.1	0.1	<0.1
Two or More Races, %	1.7	3.4	2.9	3.9	3.7	2.5
Hispanic or Latino, %	5.6	12.0	3.3	7.3	16.4	5.3
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, %	87.1	70.5	86.0	76.6	73.5	79.7
Veterans, 2010-2014	219006	12073	9526	7013	5310	2579
Foreign born persons, %, 2010-2014	4.7	11.3	3.4	3.9	10.7	13.4
Language other than English spoken at home	7.4	17.2	5.1	6.4	17.9	17.2
High school graduate or higher, age 25 years+, %	91.3	87.3	93.3	90.7	83.6	*95.4
Bachelor's degree or higher, age 25 years+, %	26.4	24.7	30.9	27.3	20.5	58.8
With a disability, under age 65 years, %, 2010-2014	7.7	10.4	7.5	7.4	8.8	5.7
Persons without health insurance,	7.2	12.0	8.8	12.9	14.7	8.7
Persons in poverty, %	12.2	19.9	11.9	17.7	16.6	**27.6

QuickFacts data derived from: Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, Current Population Survey, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Non-employer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits.

Populations with Barriers to Employment

WIOA defines a number of populations which may experience significant barriers to employment. Iowa is no different than any other state in recognizing that many of its residents may experience difficulty gaining and maintaining employment. The State Plan outlines many of the ways that these individuals will be assisted.

Among the individuals with significant barriers to employment, the following are most notable:

- There are 88,508 potential displaced homemakers as defined as non-wage earners living in a family setting (2014 American Community Survey)
- There are an additional 124,355 individuals that are considered low-income, as defined by earning less than 125% of the federal poverty level wage (2014 American Community Survey).
- There are 15,619 American Indians or Alaska Natives in the state (2014 American Community Survey).
- There are 27,352 youth that have significant disabilities (2014 American Community Survey).
- There are approximately 2,314 homeless individuals,
- 675 youth aged out of foster care in Iowa in 2014, of this, more than 2% percent lacked a formal transition plan (IA Dept. of Children and Families)
- 213,227 or 7.4 percent of all individuals in the state speak a language other than English at home, which may indicate limited English proficiency (2014) American Community Survey).

Individuals with Disabilities

There are 76,576 working age people with a recognized disability in Iowa and 46.5% of them are employed. This number places Iowa 3rd in the nation, behind South Dakota and North Dakota. There are approximately 14,500 youth with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 20. Each year 25% of youth with disabilities age out of the school system with the goal of achieving career success. Transitioning these individuals into the workforce with the skills needed to compete for in-demand jobs will be essential to meet Iowa's growing demand for skilled workers. Iowa's low unemployment rate and the significant skills gap in the labor force, place a greater focus on the need to find ways to bring more people with disabilities into the workforce. Iowa still ranks 7th in the nation in terms of the gap in labor force participation rate (LFPR) between those with and without disabilities. Iowa is outperforming the national average with 34.7% of their 26,400 people with intellectual or developmental disabilities employed and 52.5% of the 13,600 Iowans who are blind or have vision loss are employed as are 58.5% of the 22,900 with hearing differences. Iowa must continue to focus on how to best empower more individuals with disabilities through the independence that employment provides.

Table 9 highlights the top two barriers to employment the clientele of for Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) face throughout Iowa. It is important to keep in mind those served by IVRS have a presenting disability in addition to the listed barriers. This data is current as of December 14, 2015 and includes information from the IVRS total caseload. Of IVRS total caseload (13,982), there were 3,334 persons who were considered low-income. This is determined by participants' income and state assistance dependency at the time of application. It represents nearly a quarter (23.85%) of all persons currently being served by IVRS with some agencies reporting more than 30% low-income. An average of seven out of 10 participants lack basic educational or occupational skills, with participant residing in Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, and Mason City reporting much higher percentages (9.44, 12.05, and 10.77 respectively). IVRS' prior standards and indicators required the Agency to evaluate the progress made toward self-sufficiency by comparing the income levels at application and at closure of the case record. IVRS continues to evaluate the progress job candidates make toward achieving self-sufficiency as defined by the number of individuals who report dependency upon their own wages at

substantial gainful activity levels at closure. IVRS continues to focus and make substantial progress impacting individuals incomes.

Table 9: Individuals Whose Wages Increased from Application/At Closure: 2012-2015 (%)

FFY	Count Increased Annual Wages	Total Successful Closures	Percent
2012	2,009	2,162	92.92%
2013	2,024	2,185	92.63%
2014	2,046	2,205	92.79%
2015	2,180	2,321	93.93%

Table 10 presents the number of individuals with disabilities that have co-occurring barriers to employment with other programs and services that specifically serve this population. IVRS connects individuals with those programs and services based on the goals identified and the services that are available. IVRS' caseload data is displayed is for a 12-month period.

Table 10: Individuals with Co-Occurring Barriers to Employment, As of 12/2015

Agency	Agency Caseload	Low Income Barrier Count	Low Income % of Caseload	Lack Education or Occupational Skills Barrier Count	Lack Education or Occupational Skills % of Caseload
Burlington	549	90	16.39%	25	4.55%
Cedar Rapids	1568	464	29.59%	148	9.44%
Council Bluffs	863	271	31.40%	104	12.05%
Davenport	884	233	26.36%	84	9.50%
Dubuque	1070	180	16.82%	40	3.74%
Fort Dodge	968	249	25.72%	63	6.51%
Iowa City	929	284	30.57%	76	8.18%
Mason City	910	229	25.16%	98	10.77%
North Central	1599	350	21.89% ^c	87	5.44%
Ottumwa	779	197	25.29%	51	6.55%
Sioux City	997	206	20.66%	16	1.60%

Agency	Agency Caseload	Low Income Barrier Count	Low Income % of Caseload	Lack Education or Occupational Skills Barrier Count	Lack Education or Occupational Skills % of Caseload
Waterloo	1183	227	19.19%	53	4.48%
West Central	1683	354	21.03%	76	4.52%
13982	3334	*23.85%	921	*6.72%	

***Average percentage per office**

According to the data, the number of individuals who needed to obtain their high school diploma by fiscal year was relatively small compared to the caseload totals. In these cases, IVRS staff works to connect the job candidates with providers of HISET - the high-school equivalency exam used in Iowa -so these individuals can improve their education and pursue post-secondary training. Most of the individuals who receive services from IVRS out of high school have graduated from their secondary education program, which speaks to the collaboration IVRS has with the secondary schools.

Over the course of years, the percent of individuals with disabilities who have not obtained their high school diploma prior to working with IVRS has declined. Many times IVRS counselors are involved in staffings to encourage students to remain in school and obtain their high school diploma in order to increase their opportunities upon graduation. Table 11 shows that while IVRS and schools are successful with encouraging secondary completion, students still exit with credentialing skill gap. IVRS works to provide appropriate training programs to enhance the job seeker's skill sets so they can become more competitive and employed in an integrated work environment. Only 6.7% of the caseload demonstrates a lack of education or skill sets that require further development.

Table 11: Percent of IVRS Job Candidates Enrolled in HISET (GED) by FFY 2012-2015

FFY	2012	2013	2014	2015
Count	33%	20%	20%	11%

Over the course of the past three fiscal years, the percentage of cases in training by category has not substantially changed. This shows that once the individual with a disability achieves their high school diploma or HISET, a substantial portion of the IVRS caseload pursues a post-secondary training credential. While it is not difficult for the person with a disability to obtain their post-secondary credential, the difficulty comes with the employment process. This population of individuals is one of the highest educated populations and has one of the highest unemployment rates. With the WIOA requirements of increased workforce system partnering, IVRS plans to work more extensively with IWD and other core program partners to educate

Iowa business and employers are educated on the talents and skills of this population, and the supports available to enhance successful competitive integrated employment.

Table 12: FFY2015 Credential Attainment, IVRS' Caseload

Credential	Count Achieved	Percent
High school diploma and moderate to long-term OJT	77	1.87%
High school diploma and apprenticeship	1	0.02%
Postsecondary non-degree award	528	12.82%
Some college, no degree	923	22.41%
AA, AS, BA, BS, post graduate and professional degree	949	23.05%
All Other Education Levels	1,640	39.83%

IWD conducted the fifth annual Workforce Needs Assessment from July 2014 through October 2014. In addition to vacancy and retirement data, the survey also addressed the demand for workers and skills required in the workforce. The results of the survey were analyzed on both a statewide and regional basis. In July 2014, a total of 39,996 employers in the state were contacted either by mail or email and asked to complete the survey. By the end of the survey period (October 31, 2014), IWD had received 9,754 responses, yielding a 24.4 percent response rate.

Of the employers that responded to the survey, 2,984 (31.0 percent) reported having one or more current or anticipated job vacancies, while 6,643 respondents (69.0 percent) reported having no job vacancies. There is an average of 34,378 job vacancies per day reported by employers across Iowa. The majority of reported vacancies exist in positions that typically require some training beyond high school. Of employers that reported job vacancies, 41.3 percent were businesses with 10 or fewer employees, 51.2 percent had between 11 and 99 employees and 7.5 percent had 100 employees or more. While large employers only accounted for 7.5 percent of the survey responses, nearly half (47.2 percent) of the total job vacancies in the state were with large employers. During the same period of time the average ratio of unemployed persons for every vacant position was 1.7 percent.

Low-Income Workers

According to US Census data, of Iowa's 3,004,857 citizens, 367,816 individuals are living in poverty. In 2014, Iowa ranked 15th among states for the percentage of people who had incomes below the poverty line, 12.2 percent or \$23,834 for a family of four, and 14.0 percent of working women, ages 18-64, had incomes below the poverty line. During the same period 14.9 percent of Iowa's children under age 18 in related families had incomes below the poverty line, ranking Iowa 10th in the nation for child poverty. Creating real opportunities for Iowa's low-income earners to advance within the workforce system remains a priority of the workforce delivery system partners.

In consideration of other factors, such as Iowa's Housing Wage, fair market rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$689. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities - without paying more than 30 percent of income on housing - a household must earn \$2,298 monthly or \$27,576 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$13.26. In Iowa, a minimum wage worker earns an hourly wage of \$7.25. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment, a minimum wage earner must work 73 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or a household must include 1.8 minimum wage earners working 40 hours per week year-round in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable. The estimated mean (average) wage for a renter is \$10.56. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment at this wage, a renter must work 50 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or, working 40 hours per week year-round, a household must include 1.3 workers earning the mean renter wage in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable. Low-income workers are considered a priority population. Supporting working families through a range of state, federal and public-private partnerships will continue to be a priority of the Branstad-Reynolds administration and Iowa policymakers.

Iowa's Aging Population

The 2014 Iowa Local Employment Dynamics (LED) data reported 80,569 individuals over the age of 64 working throughout the state. They represent approximately 5.7 percent of the total workforce. The educational services (8.8 percent); agriculture and mining (8.0 percent); arts, entertainment and recreation (7.9 percent); and personal services (7.9 percent) industries have the highest percentage of their workforce over the age of 64. There are more males than females in this portion of the workforce, with 51.1 and 48.9 percent respectively. Of those employees eligible to retire, almost all (94.2 percent) of them meet the current skill requirements of the positions they occupy. Iowans over the age of 65 make up about 16 percent of the state's population, outpacing the national average of 14 percent, according to a report published by the Administration on Aging, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. By the year 2030, Iowa's 65+ population is expected to double.

The future year estimates in subsequent reports will reflect employees who did not retire in the year they actually were eligible as they may choose to continue their employment. In the next five years, there will be a significant number of workers eligible for retirement from the manufacturing; healthcare and social services; wholesale and retail trade; education; and public administration industries, according to information obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015). The report also looked at the number of older Americans living in poverty and those who still are in the workforce. The number of older Iowans living below the poverty level at \$11,770 for an individual is lower than the national rate of 9.5 percent at only 7.5 percent.

While the number of retirees can be somewhat hard for employers to gauge as they look toward the future. The annual estimated number of eligible retirees through 2018. With an estimated 11,949 employees already eligible to retire within the state, many retirement-eligible employees are choosing to remain in the workforce due to their employer's retention efforts or other reasons. According to the survey, an average of 1.2 percent of the state's workforce becomes eligible for retirement each year. Current projections available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics, show that between 2015 and 2018 at least 40,000 people will be eligible to retire in Iowa.

Veterans

Iowa's veteran population is a recognized priority in the provision of workforce development services. The state has a proud tradition of effectively transitioning its returning military professionals to civilian employment. There are more than 219,006 veterans of working age (between 18 and 64) in Iowa, representing another vital potential workforce resource. The state's veteran population has a labor force participation rate that is; on average 5 percentage points lower than the state as a whole. Twenty-six percent of veteran's experience some type of disability, a rate that is nearly twice that of the non-veteran population. Therefore, their participation in the state's labor force is depressed due to barriers they face. Veterans are also significantly more likely to leave the labor force before the age of 55 than their non-veteran counterparts due either to disability or retirement benefits. More detailed information on programs available for Veterans is provided under the Veteran-specific section.

Ex-Offenders (Returning Citizens)

Another notable group that faces significant barriers to employment in Iowa is its incarcerated population. Over 8,200 inmates were under the custody of the Iowa Department of Corrections in Iowa prisons as of December 31, 2015. An additional 28,924 are on probation/parole and 1,517 are housed in community-based residential facilities (halfway houses). Ninety-one percent of this population is male. The incarcerated population has a larger share of minority inmates than the general population and a significantly lower level of educational attainment. Programs such as the Offender Re-entry Project, Registered Apprenticeship programs and other partnerships between the Department of Corrections and the workforce development community are aimed at acquiring workforce skills and reducing recidivism.

The groups listed above offer resources to help combat Iowa's workforce quantity challenge. Programs discussed in this plan are offered to provide these workforce populations the training and support required to allow them to productively enter the state's labor force and to gain permanent, self-sustaining employment.

Labor Market Trends

According to Battelle, the Iowa economy is evolving. There is a shift from goods-producing to service-providing industries in response to a range of factors including an aging population, automation, and technology advances. Manufacturing, the largest of the goods-producing industries, has been transformed by technology. Iowa's nonfarm employment is a mix of goods-producing and service-providing industries. Natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing are defined as goods-producing sectors. In Iowa, the goods-producing component of the economy has lost employment due to the decline in manufacturing jobs since 2000. The goods-producing industries, which accounted for 21.5% of the state's nonfarm jobs in 2000, represented 19.0 percent of these jobs in 2014. Both construction and manufacturing incurred large job cuts as the result of the 2008-2009 recession. Meanwhile, the state's service-providing industries have increased their proportion of nonfarm employment from 78.5 percent in 2000 to 81.0 percent in 2014. The top three service-providing sectors from 2000-2014 (based on rate of growth) were professional and business services (+26.5 percent), education and health (+22.9 percent), and finance (+16.1 percent).

Information Technology lost 14,800 jobs or 36.6 percent of its employment over the period. Most of the losses were concentrated in telecommunications and in book and newspaper publishing and printing. However, the sector is starting to add jobs again as new businesses

emerge that provide internet publishing and broadcasting services and web search portals. Health services will continue to be one of the fastest-growing sectors in the state due to the state's aging population, which will increase the demand for these services.

Some of the newer technologies will play an important role in driving employment growth over the next decade. Included among these are the mobile internet, cloud technology, 3D printing, advanced robotics, renewable energy and next-generation genomics.

For nearly a decade, the millennial generation has been entering the workforce in growing numbers. Currently, this youngest group of workers represents the largest component of the state's workforce at over 600,000 (38 percent). In 2013, over half of the generation was concentrated in the 25 to 34-year-old age cohort. The Millennials have become larger than the Baby Boom generation, and the generation has not realized its full potential since many of its members are still in their teens and attending school. Though there is a lack of consensus on exact dates, a Millennial is someone who was born in the 1980's and 1990's. This generation is also referred to as Generation Y, or the "echo boom" generation. Generation Y represents a population bulge, rivaling the size of the Baby Boom generation. Within just a few years, workers in this group will account for about one half of the state's total workforce.

Aging Iowans

Birth years are generally used to define the generations: Millennials (1980-1999), Generation X (1965-1979), Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and the Silent Generation (1925-1945). Each generation displays unique traits that are the result of the economic, political and social environment in which they were raised. For example, the Millennials were disproportionately affected by the deep recession of 2008-2009, which in many cases delayed their entry into the workforce. A Pew Research Study found that based on measures such as the percentage unemployed or the share living in poverty, this generation of college-educated adults is faring worse than Gen Xers, Baby Boomers or members of the Silent Generation when they were in their mid20s and early 30s. A major generational shift is occurring in the workforce as the Baby Boomers are beginning to retire, while their children—the "Millennials"—enter their prime working years. The Baby Boom generation is currently 50 to 68 years of age, and accounts for 32 percent of the state's workforce. The ongoing retirements of the Baby Boomers are likely to cause skill shortages since these individuals have acquired a broad base of knowledge and skills that will need to be replaced. Several of Iowa's major industries have relatively high proportions of workers in the 55 and over age category, which will require many positions to be filled. Iowa's Educational Services and Utilities sectors have the largest concentration of older workers at 30 percent.

Other sectors with high proportions of older workers are:

- Mining (29 percent),
- Public Administration (28 percent),
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (27 percent) and
- Transportation and Warehousing (27 percent).

Iowa's labor force expanded again in 2014 following small declines during the 2009 to 2012 recovery period. The deep recession of 2008-2009 officially ended in June 2009, but its effects lingered with job growth subpar for the next several years. The lack of job opportunities

following the recession discouraged many individuals from seeking employment. In 2015, Iowa's labor force is again expected to experience strong growth following a gain of over 30,000 workers last year (+1.8 percent). From 1990 to 2014, Iowa's labor force expanded by 253,400 workers, translating into a growth rate of 17.5 percent or 0.7 percent annually. In contrast, the U.S. labor force grew by 23.9 percent over the same period, or close to 1.0 percent annually. Future labor force growth for both Iowa and the nation is expected to be slower as the population ages. According to the 2013 population estimates, Iowa ranks 10th in the nation based on the proportion of its population 65 and over, and 4th in the nation based on its share of population 85 and over.

Historical Patterns

Historical patterns show that labor force growth is tied to population growth and a strong economy. An area that continues to add both people and jobs is most likely to experience long-term economic prosperity. In Iowa, the metro areas have become magnets for individuals looking for higher-paying job opportunities. This trend has been apparent for some time, and is one of the factors that have decreased the supply of younger workers in many of Iowa's rural counties. For example, Dallas County, which is a part of the Des Moines metro area, leads all Iowa counties based on population and labor force growth. From 1990 to 2014, the county increased its labor force by 26,000 workers for a robust growth rate of 161.5 percent. Johnson County ranked second, adding 26,500 workers (45.9 percent). Based on numeric change, Polk County increased its labor force by the largest number—66,800 (35.2%). Conversely, 22 of Iowa's rural counties lost a sizable portion of the rural labor force over the same period; Page County led the group with an 18.5 percent drop. Other significant losses occurred in Winnebago County (-17.2 percent) and Hamilton County (-15.5 percent).

Although Iowa's labor force has grown at a slow pace, the state has one of the higher labor force participation rates in the nation. In 2014, the rate was 70.4 percent compared to 62.9 percent for the U.S. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the working age population (16-64) who are employed or unemployed.

It is important to note that Iowa has identified the collection and evaluation of data by and between agencies as an area needing improvement. Throughout the plan various data sets have been drawn from and reviewed and it is acknowledged by agency leaders and stakeholders that improved data collection, evaluation and dissemination methods be updated to reflect current technological advances and to draw a more accurate and consistent picture of workforce services. Such a difference is noted in the Georgetown Report which projects Iowa to have approximately 1.84 million jobs in 2025; while Iowa's Labor Market and Information Division (LMI) projects it will have 1.8 million in 2022. In particular, the Georgetown Report estimates there will be a larger number of jobs in government, real estate, and professional, scientific, and technical services, while Iowa projects there will be a larger number of jobs in education.

Table 13: Georgetown Report projects more total jobs by 2025 than the state of Iowa projects.

Industry	2022 LMI Projections	2025 Georgetown Projections	Difference
Educational services	187,000	47,000	140,000
Healthcare and social assistance	244,700	213,000	31,700
Manufacturing	221,100	189,900	31,200
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	108,600	86,700	21,900
Accommodation and food services	127,300	116,000	11,300
Wholesale trade	74,000	63,500	10,500
Management of companies and enterprises	22,300	14,800	7,500
Retail trade	193,500	189,700	3,800
Utilities	6,100	6,100	0
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2,200	4,400	2,100
Information	27,000	30,200	3,300
Transportation and warehousing	75,200	79,500	4,300
Other services (except public administration)	68,900	80,700	11,800
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	22,400	34,200	11,800
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	82,500	97,500	15,000
Professional, scientific, and technical services	53,900	71,900	18,000
Construction	80,100	99,700	19,600
Finance and insurance	105,200	133,900	28,700
Real estate and rental and leasing	15,100	54,700	39,600
Government	87,600	226,600	138,900
Total	1,804,600	1,839,900	35,300

Note: Differences shown in italics are cases for which Iowa projections for the particular occupation are higher than Georgetown Report projections. Columns may not sum to totals due to rounding. Sources: Labor Force & Occupational Analysis Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development, "Iowa Industry Projections by (2012-2022) by NAICS Code," 2015; and Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl, Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020, 2013.

Skill Gaps

Data on Iowa's occupations confirm that Iowa retains a strong demand for skilled workers. Employers in all industries have a growing need for workers with training or education beyond high school. According to a 2014 report published by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, less than 40 percent of Iowa's adults ages 25 - 64, have at least an associate's degree while more than 60 percent of jobs in the state will require postsecondary credentials by 2018. Iowa's percent of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher is 25 percent. Economic projections show that skill-based technological change across industries and occupations will support rising demand for postsecondary education and training.

In the American education system, the four-year Bachelor's degree is the default educational pathway. However, while many good jobs that pay a living wage do not require a Bachelor's degree, but they do require some education or training beyond high school. There are 29 million such jobs in the national economy. In Iowa, there are 400,000 middle-skill jobs that pay at least \$35,000 per year; this represents 26 percent of all jobs in Iowa. Forty percent of these jobs pay more than \$50,000 annually and 14 percent pay more than \$75,000 annually.

IVRS recognizes that education is an avenue to achieve self-sufficiency and provide a competitive edge to persons with disabilities. As a result, almost 36 percent of the IVRS caseload is actively involved in obtaining a post-secondary credential or degree.

Middle-skill jobs will comprise 39 percent of Iowa's employment. That 39 percent breaks down into these categories:

- Associate's degree holders (12 percent)
- Certificate holders (5 percent)
- Workers with a professional certification or occupational license as their only credential beyond high school (5 percent)
- Workers who completed apprenticeships (3 percent)
- Workers who completed some college coursework that have market value including noncredit courses with market value (14 percent)

There are five pathways to these jobs: two-year associate's degrees, postsecondary certificates, professional certifications and occupational licenses, registered apprenticeship programs, and employer-based training. Another avenue, referred to as a career pathway, is one in which students and trainees take a series of courses in a narrow range of occupational competencies coupled with work-based learning opportunities, and results in attainment of industry-recognized credentials.

Disparities exist in the college participation rate of low-income students compared to students from families with higher incomes. The number of students who enroll in college immediately after high school has remained stagnant for low-income students, while increasing for middle- and upper- income students. With more of Iowa's students projected to be from low-income families in the future, increasing college access will become even more crucial.

Nine of Iowa's 10 largest school districts reported increases in four-year graduation rates. Of those districts, Cedar Rapids reported the largest gain of 4.1 percent; the district's overall four-year graduation rate is 85 percent for the Class of 2014. Iowa graduation rates are calculated with a formula established by the U.S. Department of Education. **Table 14** provides a comparison of Iowa's four-year graduation rate for the classes of 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011:

Table 14: Iowa's Four-Year High School Graduation Rate by Subgroup

Class Year	All Students	IEP	Low SES	ELL	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	White
Class of 2014	90.5%	76.4%	84.1%	83.1%	78.6%	78.3%	90.8%	81.7%	92.2%
Class of 2013	89.7%	72.7%	80.4%	75.7%	73.8%	83.2%	91.1%	79.5%	91.5%
Class of 2012	89.3%	72.7%	79.7%	73.9%	74.1%	72.7%	89.9%	77.5%	91.1%
Class of 2011	88.3%	69.9%	78.1%	70.0%	73.2%	79.2%	88.5%	75.2%	90.2%
Difference 2013 to 2014	0.8%	3.7%	3.7%	7.4%	4.8%	-4.9%	-0.3%	2.2%	0.7%

Source: Iowa Department of education, <https://www.educateiowa.gov/article/2015/04/01/iowa-s-high-school-graduation-rate-tops-90-percent>

Iowa's annual dropout rate decreased in the 2013-14 school year from the year before. The 2013-14 dropout rate was 2.7 percent, a decrease of 0.1 percent from the previous year. The rate reflects the percentage of students in grades 9-12 who drop out of school during a single year. The state's 2013-14 dropout rate represents 3,932 students.

Table 15: Grades 9-12 Dropout Rate by Subgroup

Academic Year	All Students	IEP	Low SES	ELL	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	White
2013-2014	2.7%	4.5%	5.3%	5.2%	7.2%	6.2%	1.6%	4.4%	2.2%
2012-2013	2.8%	4.4%	5.6%	5.7%	6.9%	6.7%	2.0%	5.3%	2.3%
Academic Year	All Students	IEP	Low SES	ELL	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	White
2013-2014	2.7%	4.5%	5.3%	5.2%	7.2%	6.2%	1.6%	4.4%	2.2%
2012-2013	2.8%	4.4%	5.6%	5.7%	6.9%	6.7%	2.0%	5.3%	2.3%

Education Data

Demographic data on children in the college pipeline indicate that Iowa's future population of high school graduates and traditional-aged college students will be fewer in number and will be increasingly more diverse. Iowa's school-aged population has become more diverse over the past decade, and is projected continue along this path.

The IDOE shows that minority students made up 9.7 percent of total public school enrollment in 2000-2001, but by 2012-2013, their share of enrollment had more than doubled to 20.2 percent. The Hispanic student population increased the most, from 3.6 percent to 9.3 percent.

2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

A. The State's Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.*

* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

The State's Workforce Development Activities

Iowa boasts an array of programs, services and initiatives dedicated to supporting the efforts of a range of workforce stakeholders, including job-seekers and employers.

Iowa Workforce Development

The following section highlights some of the many workforce development activities. Customers entering the workforce system are provided comprehensive services and targeted referrals to other core partners. A large percentage of Wagner-Peyser referrals are from UI.

Through the IowaWORKS integrated service delivery system:

- Customers are provided career services through WP
- Services are provided through the 15 integrated one-stop centers and four satellite offices
- Dedicated WP staff are located in each of the 15 integrated one-stop center and four satellite offices

- Customers ready for employment after receiving career services may receive staff assisted job search and placement
- Customers in need of training services are referred to other core partners depending on customer needs
- Training services are provided through WIOA, VR or Adult Education Services

Online services include:

- Resume builder
- Targeted job leads
- Career exploration and assessments
- Identify gaps in skills; experiences and education
- Adult/DW

One-stop services aim to respond to business demand for workforce improvement by up-skilling adults and dislocated workers and equipping them with current, in-demand skills to help them compete in today's job market. The system provides collective access to career services to meet the diverse needs of job seekers. Career and training services, tailored to the individual needs of jobseekers, form the backbone of the one-stop delivery system. All customers have immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in basic career services, with connection of the customer to additional individualized career services, when determined appropriate in order for a customer to achieve their career goal and obtain or retain employment.

Youth

The WIOA Title I Youth Program seeks to provide young people with customer-centered, high quality services to enhance their skill sets and likelihood of gaining and retaining meaningful employment and attaining self-sufficiency. WIOA youth programs are meant to provide participants with a continuum of services to help them navigate between the educational and workforce systems. Services are based on individual needs of each participant.

Trade

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program provides reemployment assistance to workers who are displaced - due to a lack of work and no fault of their own - from firms hurt by foreign trade, as certified by the U.S. Department of Labor. Assistance is provided to the adversely affected workers so they can overcome job loss and secure reemployment. IWD staff conducts informational meetings for the workers of the closing organizations and helps affected workers access benefits and services which will help enhance their re-employability and build competitiveness for in-demand occupations. The program provides seamless services to participants through a coordinated and functionally aligned effort.

Wagner-Peyser Work with Ex-Offenders

Thousands of inmates and youth are released from Iowa prisons each year. Many of them are eager to get a job and lead a productive life. Without a job it is nearly impossible for these individuals to establish a new life and become productive citizens. Hiring an ex-offender can help them integrate into society so they can become a taxpayer instead of a tax burden. Iowa Workforce Development, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Corrections, has

implemented the Ex-Offender Initiative. IWD staff assigned to this initiative work with inmates and network with employers to address the barriers they may have in hiring ex-offenders. Each of the participants in the program completes the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC). In addition, offenders are also offered work readiness classes that emphasize job applications, resume writing, interviewing skills and effectively addressing the criminal history issue. All of these classes will help the offender present himself or herself better during the recruitment, interviewing and hiring processes with employer. Many employers experiencing labor shortages consider their number one challenge is to identify, attract and retain employees. To address these needs, employers are increasing their applicant pool by looking at individuals with criminal histories. Employed ex-offenders are some of the most dedicated and productive employees. They are overwhelmingly dependable and punctual and the turnover rate is atypically low.

Federal Bonding Program

This program benefits an employer by providing fidelity bond insurance in situations where the employer chooses to hire someone thought to be high risk. The advantage of the program is that the employer profits from the worker's skills and abilities and is covered in case of potential theft or dishonesty. The bond promotes confidence in a job seeker who needs gain re-entry into or maintain a connection to labor market and demonstrate that he or she can be a productive worker.

Rapid Response Assistance and Layoff Aversion

Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion is a proactive, business-focused, and flexible strategy designed to help companies access an available pool of skilled workers affected by downsizing. It also allows a quick response to layoffs and plant closings by coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers. Federal and state WARN (Iowa Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) laws offer protection to workers, their families, and communities by requiring employers to give advance notice to the affected workforce or their representatives (e.g. a labor union). The rapid response system first seeks to avert layoffs, when possible, while maintaining the capacity to return workers to productive employment and/or education as quickly as possible if the layoff is unavoidable. Effective rapid response activities require collaboration with employers, employee representative(s), workforce system partners and the community to quickly maximize public and private resources to minimize the disruptions on companies, affected workers, and communities that are associated with job loss.

National and State Emergency Grants (NEG's and SEG's)

These special grants are used to temporarily increase the capacity of state, local, and tribal governments to provide dislocated worker services in response to plant closings and mass layoffs by providing retraining and re-employment services to individuals dislocated because of a closure or substantial layoff from a specific business or facility. Emergency grants assist dislocated workers so that all customers would benefit from the service integration, functional alignment, and resources among programs. State or National Emergency Grants provide time-limited funding assistance in response to significant economic events and responds to an unanticipated need for assistance that cannot reasonably be accommodated within the ongoing operations of the WIOA formula-funded (including the discretionary resources reserved at the

state level). In addition, SEG's or NEG's provide temporary employment in response to federally-declared "emergency or disaster situation of national significance". This may include declarations by recognized chief official of a federal agency with jurisdiction. Individuals dislocated by the disaster event perform clean-up and recovery activities in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), state, and local efforts.

Veterans

Iowa Workforce Development currently has 15 Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists (DVOPs) who are located in our IowaWORKS offices across the state. DVOPs main activity is to provide intensive services (comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual, employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination, of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals; group counseling; individual counseling and career, planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training) to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who have a significant barrier to employment. DVOPs are an essential resource in our IowaWORKS centers.

Iowa has one Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) who is domiciled in the Des Moines IowaWORKS office. The LVER conducts outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a State under the applicable State employment service delivery system.

The Skilled Iowa initiative also offers Iowans - with Veterans having priority - an opportunity to upgrade their skills through an unpaid internship program. The initiative's first internship trained a Veteran at a central Iowa business. The business ultimately hired the Veteran for a fulltime position. Over 500 internships have been offered, and 58% resulted in an offer of employment to the participant. Those numbers include 59 Veterans who participated in an internship, 48 who completed the activity, and 24 (or 50%) who were offered employment. For more information about Skilled Iowa, go to www.skillediowa.org.

Home Base Iowa

Another initiative of Iowa Governor Branstad is "Home Base Iowa," which was signed into law on Memorial Day, 2014. This legislation provides the following benefits to Iowa Veterans, as well as Transitioning Service Members looking to make this state their home:

- Fully exempts military pensions from state income tax, and includes surviving spouses in this exemption;
- Special license plate fees waived for those eligible for veteran-related specialty plates (Bronze Star, Disabled Veteran, Ex POW, Gold Star, Iowa National Guard, Legion of Merit, Medal of Honor, Pearl Harbor Veteran, Purple Heart, Retired by branch, Air Force Cross Medal, Airman's Medal, Navy Cross, Service Cross Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Medal, Soldier's Medal, Silver Star Medal, Veteran;)

- Allows private employers to give preference in hiring and promotion to veterans and surviving spouses of military personnel who died either while on active duty, or as a result of such service;
- Increases funding and eligibility for Military Homeownership Assistance Program;
- Requires licensing boards to adopt rules giving credit for military training and experience, as well as draft proposals allowing license reciprocity for military spouses; and
- Higher education institutions must set academic credit standards for military experience.

Another component of Home Base Iowa is member businesses and communities. The Home Base Iowa Communities initiative designates communities as centers of opportunity for military veterans and further highlights Iowa's statewide commitment to welcoming veterans to the state. Standards to become a Home Base Iowa community include:

- Ten percent of the businesses in the community agree to pledge to hire a specific number of veterans, post their jobs with IWD, and become a member of Skilled Iowa;
- The community develops its own welcome/incentive package for veterans;
- The community prominently displays the Home Base Iowa Community designation; and
- The community obtains a resolution of support from the appropriate local governing body.

Iowa currently has 36 Home Base Iowa communities. For more information, see www.homebaseiowa.org. This website also provides information on job opportunities in Iowa through the .jobs microsite for Veterans, veteran-friendly employers and communities, resources for veterans, Home Base Iowa employers, and more.

Iowa was also the first state to partner with Hilton Worldwide to offer no-cost accommodations to military personnel. The Hilton Honors hotel stays can be used to pursue job opportunities in any industry - and can be used to support job interviews, skills training, housing searches for newly employed Iowans, and other job-seeking activities within the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii. Iowa is making points available to Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, Spouse, National Guard and Reserve members, and anyone meeting the Wagner-Peyser definition of a Veteran. Case management is not a requirement. Iowa is currently the largest user of this benefit.

An Air Force Lieutenant Colonel was the first Home Base Iowa hire and the first recipient of Hilton Honors benefits. A native of Maine, the LTC is an Air Force Academy graduate completing 20 years of service to our country this summer. His distinguished career included service as an F-16 pilot, fighter squadron commander, and senior analyst. His last assignment was at the Pentagon as the deputy division chief for operations force management. He has over 2,817 total flying hours, as well as two Distinguished Flying Crosses for service in Serbia and Iraq. He moved to Iowa in 2014 with his wife - an Iowa native - and family to start his civilian career in Des Moines.

Iowa Adult Education and Literacy

Adult education has a rich history in Iowa of providing services that assist adults in improving their skills, achieving their educational goals, and transitioning to further education or

employment. Instruction is designed for adults functioning at the lowest levels of basic skills and English language instruction to advanced levels of learning. As defined by Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA), Adult Education enables adults to: (1) become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; (2) obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and (3) complete a secondary school education.

The federally-funded adult education and literacy programs administered by the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) Division of Community Colleges provide lifelong educational opportunities and support services to eligible participants. Programs assist adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for work, further education, family self-sufficiency, and community involvement. Iowa's adult education and literacy (AEL) programs are delivered through the state's 15 community colleges. By improving the education and skill levels of individual Iowans, the programs enhance the competitiveness of state's workforce and economy.

Through instruction in adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE) and English as a Second Language (ESL), programs help learners to:

- gain employment or better their current employment;
- obtain a high school equivalency diploma by passing the state approved assessment;
- attain skills necessary to enter postsecondary education and training;
- exit public welfare and become self-sufficient;
- learn to speak, to read, and to write the English language;
- master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school;
- become U.S. citizens and participate in a democratic society;
- gain self-esteem, personal confidence, and a sense of personal and civic responsibility.

Eligibility for enrollment includes persons that are at least 16 years of age and not enrolled or required to be enrolled in a secondary school under Iowa Code chapter 299.1A; and meet one of the following:

- lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society;
- do not have a secondary school diploma or a recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

In FY 2015, AEL program enrollment was 19,464, with an unduplicated headcount of 17,773. However, the data management system used to report for federal accounting purposes consisted of 18,321 participants. Of these students, 12,203 were eligible for, and therefore included in, federal year-end reporting based on the NRS requirements.

ABE instruction had the most enrollees in 2015 with 5,859 participants; 48 percent of the total enrollment. ESL was the second largest group of participants with 4,899 participants, while ASE represented 12 percent with 1,444 enrollees. There has been a five-year average increase of 5.3 percent in ESL enrollment. Of those that were enrolled in 2015 and federally reported, 50 percent were female and 35 percent self-identified as White. Thirty-one percent of participants identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, 19 percent as Black or African American, and 12

percent as Asian. The remaining three categories (Native American, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and two or more races) combine to about 3 percent of the participants.

Service Demographics

The largest age group served by AEL programs ranged between 25-44 years of age, with 49 percent in this category. The next largest group, 19-24, accounted for 26 percent. The 45-59 age group had 1,576 participants which was slightly higher than the 16-18 age group with 1,208 participants. Additional, optional demographic information is collected from participants in the AEL program that can assist in directing resources to target needs. The three highest status barriers to employment, as indicated upon entry into the AEL program, included the following: self-identified as unemployed (43 percent); self-identified as a single parent (9 percent); and self-identified as being low income (7 percent). It is important to note that a participant might indicate more than one status measure.

Table 18: AEL Populations with Identified Barriers to Employment

Region	Displaced Home-maker (%)	Low-Income (%)	Disability (%)	Veteran (%)	Single Parent (%)	Un-employed (%)	Corrections (%)	Basic Skill (%)	English Language Learners (%)	Grand Total, Number
1	+	18	5	+	20	58	-	31	11	535
2	+	19	6	+	10	46	-	60	14	315
3	+	2	2	-	13	33	-	43	23	221
4	+	2	1	-	4	17	-	37	28	321
5	+	0	1	+	4	35	29	53	29	1280
6	-	1	+	-	+	55	7	33	44	678
7	-	0	+	-	-	44	-	37	40	1041
9	1	21	-	+	19	49	-	54	16	1628
10	+	13	3	.3	8	37	11	29	20	2574
11	1	3	1	.1	10	47	10	35	33	5135
12	-	+	+	-	3	45	-	25	51	1443
13	+	3	5	+	15	29	25	58	12	992
14	+	3	3	+	10	69	-	34	12	320
15	+	1	8	+	8	53	-	41	21	765
16	+	14	5	+	12	35	45	63	5	1073

While individual unduplicated participation in adult education decreased by 1.3 percent, persisters and completers improved between FY15 and FY14. Individual participants that

remained in the program longer than 12 hours-persisters (12,203) increased to 68.5 percent. This is a 23.9 percent increase from FY14 (55.3 percent).

Measuring Educational Gains

To measure educational gains, AEL programs pre- and post-test participants after a minimum number of instructional hours. Without a post-test, measuring gains would be impossible. Of the FY15 persisters, 63.3 percent were post-tested (7,720) as compared to the post-testing rate of 59.0 percent in FY14. As a result of the increase in post-testing, 5,370 demonstrated an educational functioning level gain in FY15 (often reflected as a one to two grade level equivalency gain) and is considered a completer. This represents an additional 1,422 completers (36 percent increase) in FY15.

Performance reflects not only educational gains, but also the awarding of Iowa's High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) for eligible students passing the state identified assessment (as of January 2014 the state transitioned from using the GED® assessment to the HiSET® as a measurement of high school equivalency). In FY15, the first full reporting cycle for using the HiSET®, 1,942 diplomas were issued, a decrease of 1,466 from FY 14.

Registered Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven approach for preparing workers for jobs while meeting the needs of business for a highly-skilled workforce. It is an employer-driven, "learn while you earn" model that combines on-the-job training, provided by the employer that hires the apprentice, with job-related instruction in curricula tied to the attainment of national skills standards. The model also involves progressive increases in an apprentice's skills and wages. Registered Apprenticeship is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. Apprentices can be new hires, dislocated workers, youth or incumbent workers - anyone who needs skill upgrades.

While it is used in traditional industries such as construction and manufacturing, registered apprenticeship is also instrumental for training and development in growing industries, such as health care, information technology, transportation and logistics, agriculture, hospitality and energy. There are five components to typical registered apprenticeship programs. These include:

- 1. Business Involvement** Employers are the foundation of every registered apprenticeship program.
- 2. Structured On-the-Job Training** Apprenticeships always include an on-the-job training (OJT) component. OJT focuses on the skills and knowledge an apprentice must learn during the program to be fully proficient on the job. This training is based on national industry standards, customized to the needs of a particular employer.
- 3. Related Instruction** Apprenticeships combine on-the-job learning with related instruction on the technical and academic competencies that apply to the job. Education partners collaborate with business to develop the curriculum, which often incorporates established national-level skill standards.
- 4. Rewards for Skill Gains** Apprentices receive wages when they begin work, and receive pay increases as they meet benchmarks for skill attainment which serves to reward and motivate apprentices as they advance.

5. Nationally-recognized Credential Every graduate of a Registered Apprenticeship program receives a nationally-recognized credential. This is a portable credential that signifies to employers that apprentices are fully qualified for the job.

Iowa Currently has 740 Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors over 7000 Active Apprentices and those numbers continue to grow. The state plans to double the number of Active Apprentices in the next 5 years.

Developing Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the following industries is a priority in Iowa:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- HealthCare
- IT
- Hospitality
- Agriculture
- Construction

Iowa was one of only four states that had a 20-30% increase in Active Apprentices according to DOL. According to the Institute for Corporate Productivity, Registered Apprenticeship is thriving in many organizations across the US, with more than 19,000 RAP meeting the Department of Labor's standards nationwide. Nationwide, there are about 415,000 apprentices, and over 44,000 participants graduated from the apprenticeship system during the most recent year. While 33% of employers offer some form of apprenticeship program, only 14% have registered apprenticeship programs via the U.S. Department of Labor. Of all companies, 36% plan to either maintain or grow their existing apprenticeship program and an additional 10% plan to explore or start a program. High-performance organizations are 4.5X more likely to indicate they plan to grow their existing apprenticeship program or start one.

Community Colleges Job Training and Development Funds

Each year, U.S. employers spend \$177 billion on formal training programs and \$413 billion on informal on-the-job training.⁸ Employers often hire other businesses, educational institutions, or individuals to train their employees. While employers spend most of their formal training dollars on college-educated workers, they spend 25 percent of their formal training budgets on middle-skill workers and 17 percent on high school graduates.

Iowa has two programs designed to support job training and development for new employees (260E) and existing employees (260F). Together, they are an important part of the state's workforce development efforts. These programs, which are administered through the community colleges, play an essential role in enabling employees to remain current in their training and development so that the businesses they work for remain competitive. Through these public-private partnerships, employer training is provided at little or no cost. The programs are supported through bonds that are repaid using a diversion of a portion of payroll withholding tax revenue.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The mission of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to work for and with individuals who have disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.

Disability Determination Services Bureau

The Disability Determination Services Bureau is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for disability benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs.

Rehabilitation Services Bureau

The Rehabilitation Services Bureau assists eligible individuals to become employed. Persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services have a wide range of disabilities. Most offices are already co-located in the One-Stop Centers across Iowa. Vocational Rehabilitation is a State-Federal program. The Federal share is 78.7%; the State share is 21.3%. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau has 14 area offices and 32 service units.

Administrative Services Bureau

Administrative Services Bureau provides support to the other elements of the Division through the functions of fiscal accounting, budgeting and payroll; statistical records, reporting and closed case file control; personnel management and collective bargaining administration; purchasing and property control; information systems and the physical plant management of the Jessie Parker Building. The Office of the Administrator is responsible for overall administration of the statewide programs. The administrator determines program scope and policies, promotes public interest and acceptance, directs budget funds, develops program plans and provides for staff development, research and evaluation. Under the umbrella of the administrator are the State Rehabilitation Council and the Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Group.

Collaborative Transition Protocol (CTP)

CTP aligns secondary school IEP and IVRS IPE also providing Student Accommodation Reports for smoother postsecondary transition. Collaborative training is occurring at secondary, postsecondary and VR levels with disability support services

Benefits Planning

Benefits planning provides analysis and assistance for economic independence to individuals on SSI/SSDI.

IWD/IVRS Pilot Project

Five one stop centers are working with VR to improve work flow efficiencies through improved intake and data sharing linkages, enhanced wrap-around supports cross-system and streamlined processes.

Earn and Learn Programs

VR-eligible students with disabilities, in select target areas, benefit from Earn and Learn programs. Earn and Learn programs exist for specific trades in collaboration with Community Colleges, Registered Apprenticeship programs and businesses. VR provides stipend and facilitates business involvement, communicates with secondary, postsecondary and business implementing pathway. Earn and Learn programs can lead to various OJT employment options with a specific focus on employee needs and business needs. Efforts are being made to establish more dedicated integration with Registered Apprenticeship programs. IVRS has attended Career

Pathways trainings and are finding more opportunities to network with RAP partners and connect students to RA and related programs.

Progressive Employment

VR job candidates can access a continuum of employment services designed to meet the job candidate at their ability and provide steps for employment progress through a menu of service options designed to facilitate competitive employment.

Self-Employment Program

The Self-Employment program provides resources to help future eligible business owners in developing skills specific to running their own business and provides connection to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN)

Job candidates with disabilities are the ultimate beneficiaries. The EDRN is a one-stop resource for businesses. VR conducts regular ongoing meetings for network of service providers, including a web site, to provide timely response for business inquiries and support.

Business Specialist

The Business Specialist integrates VR staff into business and industry. Contracts are being established with businesses integrating VR service delivery and pathways specific to that business.

AAA Employment Specialists

This collaborative project with the Iowa Department of Aging provides six employment specialists housed at the Area Agencies on Aging and includes employment services and training for eligible participants.

Occupational Skill Training Programs

A myriad of skill training programs designed to meet business needs through specific training. VR eligible Job Candidates are connected with opportunities through cross collaboration with schools, businesses and community providers. Walgreens REDI, Project Search and Transition Alliance Programs are among the more than 20 programs across the state.

Access2Ability

Access2Ability is private/public partnership with Manpower Staffing agency to improve employment outcomes for VR eligible job-seekers.

MOA with Department of Education on Data Dashboard

Students with Disabilities are the ultimate beneficiaries. This program explores ways to better serve students in schools through training, parent/family engagement, resource sharing.

Making the Grade

This contract with community providers focuses on competitive job experience for students in secondary school. Seven sites across state are focused on increasing competitive employment experiences and opportunities.

Youth Leadership Forum

Targeting eligible VR job candidates, in partnership with Department of Human Rights and Iowa Department for the Blind, this program helps increase social advocacy and life skills development for youth. Junior and senior high school students participate in a week-long experience at ISU learning about the qualities related to leadership. Self-advocacy, work-readiness, and interpersonal skills development are taught. Participants also learn about employment laws and labor market needs. Through the experience participants develop confidence in their work abilities and become more connected to their community which increases employment success.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP)

In the February, 2016 report, *How States Are Expanding Apprenticeship*, By Angela Hanks and Ethan Gurwitz, Iowa was highlighted as the leader among states in “developing and supporting strategies to increase Registered Apprenticeship.” Among the contributing factors is the leadership provided by the federal Office of Apprenticeship, which oversees Registered Apprenticeship in the state. Having registered more new RA programs over the past few years, Iowa RAP are expected to keep growing. State support in the form of the Apprenticeship and Training Act in 2014, initially proposed by Gov. Terry Branstad, in his 2014 Condition of the State address and subsequent budget proposal, the act established an apprenticeship program training fund and set annual appropriations at \$3 million, tripling the amount of state funding available to support apprenticeship programs. The Iowa Economic Development Authority is responsible for overseeing the funding. This initiative complements other efforts to attract new businesses to the state, which recently became home to large data centers for Facebook, Microsoft, and Google.

The apprenticeship training program funds will be used to support grants to Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors—which are typically employers, labor-management partnerships, or industry associations—to subsidize the cost of RAP. Such costs include related classroom instruction, purchasing equipment for the apprenticeship program, and establishing new locations to expand apprenticeship training. As of 2015, 67 sponsors had submitted applications to receive grant funds.

Department for the Blind

The Department for the Blind’s mission is to empower Iowan’s of all ages who are visually impaired and blind to become employed, as well as, live independently in their community. All services at Iowa Department for the Blind, or IDB, promote employment, living independently, and full inclusion.

The Department is recognized as a leading provider of services in the United States. These rehabilitation services include innovative and effective Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Programs, as well as, world-class library services. The benefits to clients are many and include an impact on attitudes, confidence and independence. The collective social and economic impact is also significant. As Iowan’s with vision loss obtain employment they contribute to Iowa’s economy.

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as, the general

public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies.

Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state. IDB provides employment services to blind and visually impaired Iowans who are looking for a job or want to retain or advance in their current career. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities a blind or visually impaired person can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. IDB programs include:

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Iowans who are blind or have visual impairments and have goals to become employed can receive assistance planning for employment or maintaining current job through training, education, technology, career counseling, and more.

Transitional Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Transitional Vocational Rehabilitation Services works with middle, high school and college students who are blind or have visual impairments set employment goals and develop plans for achieving the goals they set. This program eases the transition from high school to the world beyond with career counseling and work experience activities by partnering with educational, employer, family, and partner stakeholders.

Business Enterprises Program

Legally blind entrepreneurs can receive training throughout Iowa to run vending machine businesses.

Youth Leadership Forum

In partnership with the Department of Human Rights and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, eligible VR clients can gain vital skills during a week-long event. Skills include:

- Leadership
- Social
- Advocacy
- Life Skills

Independent Living Program

Iowans who are blind or have Visual Impairments who desire to live independently in their home or community can access:

- Training
- Support Groups
- Rehabilitation Teaching for Iowan's with Vision Loss

Orientation Center

The Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center provides a curriculum for learning the skills of blindness needed for employment, from traveling to technology needed on the job for vocational rehabilitation clients.

Career Resources Center

The Career Resource Center provides accessible technology, equipment and software to be used to prepare, gain and maintain skills and credentials needed for employment.

Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

This program provides resources and training to ensure individuals they can participate in skill and certificate training. The library is a comprehensive resource where eligible participants can develop skills needed to gain, retain and advance in a career. Accessible resources and training are provided to locate, evaluate and effectively use information. In addition, resources to develop and enhance digital literacy skills are available. The Library also provides accessible resources and programs for English Language Learners with visual impairments and individuals with other disabilities, i.e. dyslexia, hand mobility impairments, etc.

Iowa Department of Human Services

The Iowa Department of Human Services makes a positive difference in the lives of Iowans we serve through effective and efficient leadership, excellence, and teamwork. The Mission of the Iowa Department of Human Services is to help individuals and families achieve safe, stable, self-sufficient, and healthy lives, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the state. We do this by keeping a customer focus, striving for excellence, sound stewardship of state resources, maximizing the use of federal funding and leveraging opportunities, and by working with our public and private partners to achieve results.

Employment Assistance Programs

Home and Community Based Services Supported Employment targets youth (15 and older) or Adults with Disabilities (ID and BI) or Brain Injury. This program provides participants with basic work skills and supports through career exploration, developing work skills and work supports.

PROMISE JOBS

Promoting Independence & Self-Sufficiency through Employment, Job Opportunities, and Basic Skills (PROMISE JOBS). Family Investment Program (FIP) Participants are eligible to receive employment & training services that include supportive services to address barriers to employment. Work readiness services to increase opportunities for employment outcomes are also a part of the PROMISE JOBS program. This includes overarching activities such as education, certification, training, job search assistance, and employment.

Future Ready Iowa

Future Ready Iowa aims to achieve systemic changes to increase the number of citizens with a postsecondary credential with the intended result of increasing the number of skilled workers available to employers. Igniting economic development with a skilled workforce and the best educated student population in the nation will achieve Governor Branstad's goals, which will increase the income levels of Iowa families.

For the workforce development system this means creating a system that utilizes resources efficiently and aligns government programs in a manner that responds to and supports the needs of private business. Future Ready Iowa was developed by the National Governors Association Policy Academy Developing Iowa's Future Talent Pipeline and list the general membership of the Policy Academy.

To achieve the prosperity supported by world-class talent educated with Iowa's values and work ethic, Iowa's government is responding with the workforce development system of the future. Iowa's workforce development systems will build the system of tomorrow to attain the results needed today through skill building focused on the job-driven expectations of business and industry - occupational and soft skills.

Through implementation of career pathways and infusing of robust sector strategies across systems, Iowa is committed to serving the underserved citizenry by closing educational and employment gaps to end disparities based on disability, ethnicity, race, class, and geographic location. By 2025, 70% of all Iowans will have earned a postsecondary degree or industry-recognized credential or certification - the new minimum - that meets employer needs.

Future Ready Iowa Objectives

Identify and meet employer needs by focusing on sector strategies, career pathways and better aligning state and federal programs and initiatives, including public-private partnerships, to support high-skill, high-demand jobs.

Communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including an interactive portal of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.

Improve college and career readiness, increase interest and achievement in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) study and careers.

Minimize education-related debt.

Future Ready Iowa Strategies

1. Identify and quantify employers' education, training, and employment needs and capture those needs in a Talent Supply & Demand interactive portal to be driven by a public-private collaborative, leveraging and institutionalizing the sector strategies and career pathways methodologies.
2. Improve degree and credential completion and target resources to support attainment of high-demand credentials, degrees, and certifications valued by employers, including for those individuals with barriers to employment.
3. Cultivate, develop and align work-based learning opportunities including, but not limited to, STEM school-business partnerships, student internships, teacher externships and registered apprenticeships for individuals through public-private partnerships.
4. Create a system of coordinated resources to engage, assist, and reinforce Future Ready career guidance for parents, students, educators and adults.

5. Ensure secondary students have access to high quality career and technical educational programs aligned with labor market needs.
6. Ensure all Iowa students meet high state academic standards, including being literate by the end of the third grade and achieving in STEM disciplines.
7. Increase rigorous concurrent enrollment opportunities in high demand career pathways, including STEM disciplines.
8. Institutionalize the college-going process within secondary schools statewide (College Application Campaign, FAFSA Completion, assessing “college fit,” etc.).
9. Elevate and operationalize promising financial literacy models that impact student borrowing.
10. Nurture entrepreneurial connectivity and skills development.

Iowa Department for the Aging

On March 29, 2012, Governor Terry Branstad signed House File 2320 mandating a reduction in the number of Area Agencies on Aging. Frequently referred to as the “modernization of the aging network,” this initiative effectively reduced the number of AAAs from 13 to six to enhance efficiency. The Iowa Department on Aging works closely with Iowa’s six Area Agencies on Aging and other partners to design a system of information, education, support and services for Iowans that assists older Iowans and adults with disabilities maintain independence. A summary of services offered includes:

Advocacy

Advocate for changes in public policy, practices and programs that empower Iowans; facilitate their access to services; protect their rights; and prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation. Activities may include legislative advocacy, information dissemination, outreach and referral, research and analysis and coalition building.

Planning Development and Coordination

Conduct planning, policy development, administration, coordination, priority setting and evaluation of all state activities related to the objectives of the Federal Older Americans Act.

Health

Support policies, programs and wellness initiatives to empower older Iowans to stay active and healthy and improve their access to affordable, high quality home and community-based services.

Older Iowans

The 2010 U.S. Census found that 20 percent of Iowa’s population is currently 60 years of age or older. By 2030, 20 percent of the population in 88 of Iowa’s 99 counties will be aged 65 or older.

ABE Senior Community Service Employment Program

Individuals age 55 and older, at or below 125% of poverty, and unemployed can take advantage of opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and useful part-time jobs in community service organizations. The primary objective is to increase the numbers of older persons who can obtain

employment. Assist participants in receiving work skills training and provide work services for non-profit and governmental organizations.

Governor's STEM Council

Created with the goal of increasing STEM interest and achievement, the STEM Council is a collaboration of bipartisan Iowa legislators, educators, business, nonprofits, students and families focused on improving STEM opportunities and awareness in Iowa. The STEM Council follows this definition of STEM:

“...an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply science, technology, engineering and mathematics in contexts that make connections between school, community, work and the global enterprise enabling the development of STEM literacy and with it the ability to compete in the new economy.”

The Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is made up of leaders in higher education, business, pre-K through 12 educators, as well as state and local government officials. The STEM Council is led by Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds and Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson. The executive director of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is Dr. Jeff Weld. There are 47 members on the STEM Council, including 17 members that comprise the Executive Committee.

Current STEM Initiatives

Microsoft's IT Academy targets secondary and community college students and their teachers and provides office software and systems network analyst training and certifications to 150 Iowa secondary schools and community colleges.

Iowa STEM BEST Business Engaging Students and Teachers targets secondary school lead applicants with business commitments & Secondary STEM learners. This incentive program is designed to drive school/business partnerships for content delivery/aligned instruction. There are currently five active sites involving 14 districts and businesses.

STEM Teacher Externships target secondary teachers of STEM subjects, and industry partners in STEM areas. Secondary teachers of math, science, technology, and engineering matched full time in summer to an industry to take on authentic tasks and role.

STEM Internships provide grants to employers to support Iowa students studying in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through internships that lead to self-sustaining jobs with Iowa employers.

Iowa Office of Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship USA

The National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 authorizes the federal government, in cooperation with the states, to oversee the nation's apprenticeship system. In Iowa, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) is responsible for registering apprenticeship programs that meet federal guidelines. It issues certificates of completion to apprentices and encourages the development of new programs. Registered Apprenticeship is a proven system for training employees in a variety of occupations that require a wide range of skills and knowledge. It is an ideal way for employers to build and maintain a skilled workforce. Registered

Apprenticeship combines supervised on-the-job learning with technical related instruction in subjects related to the apprentice's chosen occupation. Registered Apprenticeship, by virtue of its success in preparing skilled workers, helps America compete more effectively in the global economy, and contributes to America's economic development and sustained economic growth.

The Registered Apprenticeship system provides opportunity for workers seeking high-skilled, high-paying jobs and for employers seeking to build a qualified workforce. In this regard, the Registered Apprenticeship system effectively meets the needs of both employers and workers. While Registered Apprenticeship is highly active in traditional industries such as construction and advanced manufacturing, it is also instrumental in the training and development of high demand industries such as healthcare, childcare, and energy and information technology. Registered Apprenticeship programs are operated by both the public and private sectors, with programs registered with OA called sponsors. Employers, employer associations and labor-management organizations often serve as sponsors.

Recently, community colleges and workforce development centers have collaborated with business and industry to develop Registered Apprenticeship programs through sponsoring employer-participation agreements. Regions that adopt robust Registered Apprenticeship programs in the context of economic development strategies create seamless pipelines of skilled workers and flexible career pathways to meet current and future workforce demands.

The State of Iowa tripled funding for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in 2014 to \$3 million and has been recognized by The U.S. DOL in regard to innovative practices and number of new Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses to attract and grow business, employment and workforce in Iowa. Ground-breaking economic growth strategies focusing on cultivating start-up companies and helping existing companies become more innovative complement the activities underway to retain and attract companies that are creating jobs for Iowans.

Developing sustainable, adaptable communities ready for this growth is also an essential part of our work at IEDA — providing programs and resources that help communities reinvest, recover and revitalize to make each community's vision a reality. Much of what you know about Iowa is true. It's what you don't know that sets us apart. The Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress seeks to build Iowa's economic health and strengthen supports to employers as well as current and future employees through dedicated collaborations among key agencies and streamlined processes.

Federal Career Link Program - Community Development Block Grant

Low to moderate income individuals can participate in industry-driven training programs that invest in projects that assist the underemployed and working poor to obtain the training and skills they need to move into available higher-skill, higher wage jobs.

Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E)

Finances training for new jobs created through a business expanding or locating in Iowa through the sale of bond certificates by Iowa community colleges.

Accelerated Career Education Program (ACE tax credits) (260G)

Assists community colleges to establish or expand training programs for occupations needed by Iowa business.

Targeted Industries Internship Program (TIIP)

Provides grants to small and medium-sized companies under 500 employees in the advanced manufacturing, biosciences and information technology industries to help support their internship programs with a goal of transitioning interns to full-time employment in the state upon graduation.

Iowa Jobs Training Program

Finances training for existing of incumbent workforces of Iowa businesses.

Iowa Finance Authority

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses and has touched the lives of countless Iowans through a wide variety of affordable financing programs throughout its 40-year history. Among other programs, the Agricultural Development Division offers loan and tax credit programs to assist beginning Iowa farmers. Iowa Title Guaranty is also administered at IFA and offers guaranteed title to real property in Iowa.

Training Grants (15B) The Iowa Apprenticeship Act was passed in 2014, increasing the available funding to \$3 million for training grants awarded to “sponsors” to conduct and maintain an apprenticeship program. Only apprenticeship programs that meet DOL/OA specific requirements and standards are eligible for training grants. A sponsor or lead sponsor (a trade organization, labor organization, employee organization or other incorporated entity representing a group of registered apprenticeship sponsors) may apply for an IEDA training grant. Funds awarded may only be used to help cover the cost of conducting and maintaining an apprenticeship training program.

Applications for training grants are accepted from any Iowa registered DOL/OA sponsor or lead sponsor and are due by February 1 for the previous training year (January through December). The amount of the training grants available is based on the statutory formula established under Iowa Code Chapter 15B based upon “contact hours.” Contact hours are determined based on an applicant’s combined total of apprentices and related technical instruction (RTI) hours for the most recent training year. The training grant is based on the applicant’s proportionate share of the statewide total of all contact hours.

Iowa Agricultural Development Division (IADD)

The IADD was established by the Iowa General Assembly in 1980 to provide financial assistance to Iowa’s grain and livestock producers. Operating expenses for the IADD are derived from modest application and service fees paid by program participants. The IADD also earns interest from a trust fund, but it does not receive any state tax dollars.

Economic Development

The Iowa Finance Authority issues tax-exempt bonds to businesses and organizations for a wide range of projects. These have included expanding and improving health care services, industrial development and housing. As of 2012, the Iowa Finance Authority has issued more than \$7.5 billion in bonds to assist businesses build or expand in Iowa.

Economic Development Bond Program

Issues tax-exempt bonds on behalf of private entities or organizations for eligible purposes.

Private Activity Bond Cap Allocation

In 2014, the State of Iowa received \$309 million of volume cap for allocation to eligible projects in the single-family, job training, student loan, beginning farmer, industrial and political subdivision categories.

Iowa Department of Corrections

The Iowa Department of Corrections Professional Development Training Program mission is to prepare and update institution and community correctional employees' knowledge base, skills, and competencies; to enable them to perform their duties within the parameters of sound and effective correctional practices in order to protect the general public, themselves, and their co-workers, while managing offenders in an environment that supports offender change.

B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

WIOA provided the appropriate context in which to conduct a full-scale examination of Iowa's workforce delivery system partners, supporters and beneficiaries. Throughout the course of the state's planning process, the core partners engaged stakeholders, including employers, job-seekers, support agencies and others, in all aspects of plan development. Core Partner key staff met on a weekly basis working together as a team. The team reviewed existing policies and procedures through a combination of quantitative and qualitative exercises and analyses. In March, 2015, key stakeholders participated in a week-long Value Stream Mapping event to examine the global view of the Core WIOA and integrated mandatory employment and training agencies and programs in Iowa. Identification of alignment opportunities and best practices for employment services to Iowans were primary foci of the team.

Value Stream Mapping Event Representation:

- Members of Industry
- State Workforce Investment Board Members
- Regional Workforce Development Board Members
- Department of Human Rights
- Department of Human Services - PROMISE JOBS
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation
- Iowa Department for the Blind - Business Enterprise Program, Vocational Rehabilitation Program

- Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges - Adult Education Literacy
- Iowa Workforce Development - Youth Program -Job Seekers, Migrant & Seasonal Farm Worker
- Iowa Workforce Development (IowaWORKS) - Wagner Peyser - Job Seeker, Wagner Peyser - Business Services, Adult Program - Job Seeker, Dislocated Worker - Job Seeker, Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program, Trade Assistance, Adult Program - Business Services, Dislocated Worker - Business Services, Youth Program - Business Services
- Community Colleges - GAP Program
- Iowa Department of Management
- Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Value Stream Mapping team identified and prioritized key elements that would have the most significant and positive impacts to ALL Iowa jobseekers. Key elements were prioritized to allow for a more focused approach to planning. The team ranked and prioritized the level of difficulty in completing the activities needed to move identified tasks forward. Initially, the focus was on finding existing areas of alignment between the agencies and their respective activities and programs. As the work evolved, weaknesses and strengths of the system as well as its individual parts emerged. It was soon clear that Iowa's workforce entities had been operating under a "together, but separate" model and it was time for change. A mutual respect and understanding developed among the team members as they worked together to overcome challenges and maximize benefits as a single unified force.

Vital to the process was the purposeful exploration of how and where services could be further aligned to better support job-seekers, employers and service providers. Early on the team adopted a customer-centered approach and reviewed policies practices and potential changes from the perspective of the employer and the job-seeker. Planning efforts were continuously focused on how to best serve the needs of all Iowans - including those with the most significant barriers to employment. Accessibility became a primary theme of the work being done and every potential policy, procedure, action or development was measured in terms of accessibility to ALL Iowans. All Iowans must be able to work within the context of their individual and unique natural and environmentally-specific circumstances.

As planning efforts advanced, the partners' came to learn from one another and a genuine dialogue of collaboration followed and ensured throughout the planning process. The Value Stream Mapping group also dissected and evaluated the system and its components for current and future effectiveness, accessibility, and a number of other measures.

System, program-level, and infrastructure weaknesses were identified and the following recommendations for improvements were made:

System Enhancements

- Current and Future Policies: Industry Driven
- Shared Purpose Reinforced by Quality MOUs
- Cross Training of All One-Stop Staff
- Certification of One-Stop Center
- Comprehensive Resource Assessment and Connection at all One-Stop Centers

Service Delivery Improvements

- Services: Appropriate & Accessible to ALL Iowans
- Universal Assessment
- Commonly Developed Intake & Referral Policies/Procedures
- Improved Referral Process
- Co-Enrollment in Programs (instead of sequentially enrolled)
- Waiting Lists Shared Across Programs
- Customers Make Informed Decisions
- Quality Customer Feedback System

Infrastructure & Funding Advances

- Data Collection & Sharing Across Agencies
- Blend & Braid Funds to Maximize System Capacity

This same team came back together in fall of 2015, to conduct a review of the plan and to further investigate areas of weaknesses and strengths. During the subsequent event, the issues were further examined and placed into one of two categories: system and program-specific. Program-specific issues were evaluated by the appropriate agency or group for further development. System issues were deferred for further development to workgroups and/or the planning team.

- *Issues Identified in Value Stream Mapping Event*
- Communication, duplication, and collaboration of all partners at one stops.
- Focus of workforce training beyond entry-level skills and towards postsecondary awards/credentials.

Participant referrals:

- method of delivery,
- accessibility and availability of appropriate service providers, and
- tracking of referrals once made.

Integration and data sharing to ensure proper collection and sharing of:

- client information,
- data, and
- areas of duplication in service provision.

Improved understanding of roles and responsibilities of all partners.

Seamless coordination of services to job-seekers and employers.

Elimination of the sequence of service model and incorporation of the integrated parallel career pathways model.

Ability of the partners to:

- analyze and report on all program participants,
- track participant progress and outcomes,
- “talk” to each other via an integrated data collection and dissemination system,

Eligible training providers.

- New strategies necessary for identifying opportunities to provide skills training, work-based learning, registered apprenticeship, and postsecondary/credential seeking courses together.

Strategies for Addressing Issues Identified by Value Stream Mapping Team

1) Integration of one-stop services to:

- a) remove duplication of services,
- b) enhance communication among partners,
- c) reduce barriers for job-seekers and
- d) support employer-driven policies.

2) Incorporation of middle-skills training and learn and earn models into system.

3) Common intake and referral process for all partners.

4) Universal assessment of job-seekers among agencies.

5) Advanced, consistent, training and cross-training for one-stop center and program staff.

6) Co-enrollment in educational programs upfront instead of sequentially.

7) Improved data collection and sharing capability among all agencies.

8) Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) improvements in:

- a) Availability to job-seekers and service providers,
- b) Accessibility to job-seekers, service providers, and training providers and
- c) Method of selection and approval of eligible training providers.

9) Blending and braiding of funds to maximize resources and increase efficiency.

10) Development of policy recommendations to stakeholders.

In December, 2015, the team enlisted the help of a trained facilitator to assist in the process of coming together on any remaining items and to conduct a formal and comprehensive review of progress to-date in order to refine the focus and direction of the remaining planning work. During the event, a number of “themes” developed which served to provide the foundation for system-wide and program-specific improvements throughout Iowa’s Unified State Plan.

Identified Themes:

- *Accessibility*

- *Sector Strategies*
- *Career Pathways*
- *Integration - Technology, Policy*
- *Integrated Education and Training*

Evidence of the commitment to the above-described themes which now serve as the basis for Iowa's Unified State plan are found throughout. Recommendations call for innovative strategies that are business-driven and focus on increasing the skills, talents, and abilities of the workforce so workers are prepared to scale industrial and commercial projects across the state. In order to drive the work and keep the momentum, Iowa is rapidly progressing towards a Sector Partnership model for service delivery. Such a model emphasizes industry-led local-level partnerships that maximize each region's ability to develop the workforce needed to meet the evolving demands of employers and job seekers. Iowa's Core Partners have plans to develop a handbook that highlights Best Practices which will serve as a guide for implementing the highest of standards and proven methods in One-Stop service delivery.

Iowa plans to continue to evaluate, develop and implement innovative approaches to improve system and program-specific elements of Iowa's workforce delivery system. As part of this process, individual programs also evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of their individual programs and the WIOA planning and implementation team will keep meeting on a regular basis to provide the oversight and resources needed to support lasting improvements.

C. State Workforce Development Capacity

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

State Workforce Development Capacity

When analyzing capacity, the state must acknowledge the resolute action of the fifteen local workforce development boards (WDBs). Iowa's local WDBs and their partners strive to find innovative methods of serving participants and employers in their local regions. When successful, they have developed model programming that is shared throughout the state. When program design has not produced desired results, the local providers have adjusted, refined, and shared their lessons. The pockets of excellence that exist around our state provide great opportunity to increase our capacity for serving those who can benefit significantly from our training and education programs.

During the 2013 legislative session, the Iowa Legislature made an historic investment in a portfolio of education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs designed to address Iowa's growing shortage of skilled workers and to increase the state's workforce delivery system capacity.

This \$40.3 million annual investment in worker training programs is delivered through Iowa's fifteen community colleges and is serving an increased number of Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds to help them acquire the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for gainful employment. It is funded from the state's gaming industry receipts. The following existing and new community college education, workforce development, job training, adult literacy programs and student financial aid programs are now being supported from this fund. All of these programs are under the administrative oversight of the Iowa Department of

Education with the exception of the Kibbie Tuition Grant Program that is being administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

This fund assists Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds in acquiring the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for successful access to in-demand jobs. Education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs are beneficiaries of this landmark legislation which exemplifies Iowa's ongoing commitment to innovative and job-driven solutions.

Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund

- Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund (260C.18A) \$15,100,000
- Adult Basic Education and Adult Literacy Programs (260C.50) \$ 5,500,000
- Pathways for Career and Employment Program (260H) \$ 5,000,000
- GAP Tuition Assistance Program (260I) \$ 2,000,000
- Work-based Learning Intermediary Network (256.40) \$ 1,500,000
- Kibbie Skilled Worker Shortage Tuition Grant Program (261.130) \$ 5,000,000
- ACE Infrastructure Fund (260G) \$ 6,000,000
- Workforce Preparation Outcome Reporting System \$ 200,000

Total \$40,300,000

Workforce Training and Economic Development (WTED) Fund (260C.18A)

\$15,100,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

The WTED fund was established in 2003 as part of the Grow Iowa Values Fund enabling legislation. The WTED fund has become an important source of financing for community college new program innovation, development and capacity building with a focus on career and technical education and the state's targeted industry clusters. This is the community colleges most flexible funding source and functions like a workforce development program block grant. This program can provide supplemental funding to support the PACE, GAP and adult literacy programs as needed.

Use of Funds

The monies in the Workforce Training and Economic Development fund may be used to support the following programs:

- Accelerated Career Education Program (260G).
- Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F).
- Career Academy Programs (260C.18A, subsection 2, paragraph c).
- Career & Technical Education Programs (260C.1, subsection 2).
- In-service Training and Retraining Programs (260C.1, subsection 3).
- Training and retraining programs for targeted industries (15.343, subsection 2, para. a).
- Pathways for Academic Career and Employment Program (260H).
- Gap Tuition Assistance Program (260I).
- Entrepreneurial education, small business assistance, and business incubators.
- National Career Readiness Certificate and the skills certification system endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers.

Targeted Industry Clusters

Priority is to be given to programs, projects and initiatives that fall within the states three targeted industry clusters. The program requires that **seventy percent** of the moneys appropriated shall be used on projects or programs in the areas of advanced manufacturing, renewable fuels and renewable energy, information technology and insurance, and life sciences which include the areas of biotechnology, health care technology, and nursing care technology.

Pathways for Academic Career and Employment Program (260H)

\$5,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and was funded in FY 2014 for the first time to provide funding to community colleges for the development of projects in coordination with the economic development authority, the department of education, the department of workforce development, regional advisory boards, and community partners to implement a simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive process, along with customized support services, to enable eligible participants to acquire effective academic and employment training to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment. This program is closely aligned with the GAP tuition assistance program and the adult literacy program.

GAP Tuition Assistance Program (260I)

\$2,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and first funded in FY 2013 to provide funding to community colleges for need-based tuition assistance to applicants to enable completion of non-credit, continuing education certificate training programs for in-demand occupations. This program is closely tied to the PACE career pathways program.

Adult education and literacy programs (260C.50)

\$5,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

\$3,883,000 is allocated for the ABE/GED adult literacy programs delivered by Iowa's Community Colleges as provided for in new IC Section 260C.50

\$1,467,000 is allocated for ELL adult literacy programs.

\$150,000 is allocated for DE staff support and related leadership activities.

Iowa was one of only three states that did not provide funding assistance for adult literacy programs. This new state funding is supplementing the federal Department of Labor allocation. It will build on existing career pathways policy and programs by investing in adult basic education and integrated learning programs to help more low-skilled adult workers obtain postsecondary credentials and skill sets required for employment in middle skill jobs. This funding may be used to develop and deliver contextualized coursework tied to a community colleges PACE career pathway and GAP tuition assistance programs.

Statewide Work-based Learning Intermediary Network (256.40)

\$1,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This enabling legislation and statewide network was created in 2009 with a one-time allocation of \$900,000 from the Department of Economic Development's targeted industry program funding allocation. All fifteen community colleges established a regional intermediary network but only a few remained after the initial funding was exhausted.

The program is intended to prepare students for the workforce by connecting business and education by offering relevant, work-based learning activities to students and teachers, particularly opportunities in occupations relating to STEM or to opportunities in targeted industries identified by the EDA. The program focuses on providing students with job shadowing, internships and teacher tour learning experiences.

This program funding can be used to support work-based learning experiences for students enrolled in PACE career pathways and GAP tuition assistance programs.

Kibbie Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant Program (261.130)

\$5,000,000 was appropriated to the College Student Aid Commission to support this program in FY 2016.

The Kibbie Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant Program supports students enrolling in high demand career and technical education credit programs.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. One of several workforce programs that incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers. WOTC provides an incentive to employers to hire workers who traditionally have identified barriers to employment. In Iowa more than 52,000 workers are hired annually with the assistance of the employer tax credit assistance. It also reduces the burden on employers who hire workers facing barriers to employment.

Iowa Apprenticeship Act, Iowa Code Chapter 15B

The Iowa Apprenticeship Act was passed in 2014, increasing the available funding to \$3 million for training grants awarded to "sponsors" to conduct and maintain an apprenticeship program. Only apprenticeship programs that meet DOL/OA specific requirements and standards are eligible for training grants. A sponsor or lead sponsor (a trade organization, labor organization, employee organization or other incorporated entity representing a group of registered apprenticeship sponsors) may apply for an IEDA training grant.

Training Grants. Applications for training grants are accepted from any Iowa registered DOL/OA sponsor or lead sponsor and are due by February 1 for the previous training year (January through December). The amount of the training grants available is based on the statutory formula established under Iowa Code Chapter 15B based upon "contact hours." Contact hours are determined based on an applicant's combined total of apprentices and related technical instruction (RTI) hours for the most recent training year. This grant is based on the applicant's proportionate share of statewide total of all contact hours.

Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress Board

In 2012, the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress Board (IPEP) was created by Executive Order and was charged with the “study and recommendation of solutions and policy alternatives for issues arising in the area of economic development”. The mandate of IPEP is to continuously identify and study economic growth issues facing Iowa and recommend solutions and policy alternatives. IPEP commissioned the Battelle Technology Partnership Practice to prepare a report on Iowa’s changing economic needs. A key finding was Iowa’s outpacing the nation in both GDP gains and total job gains from 2007 to 2013, and now exceeds its pre-recession levels in both economic output and total employment. Iowa’s economy continues to improve with most indices reflecting expansion and restored confidence in the economic climate. Despite softening of the agricultural economy, most sectors added jobs or maintained current levels through the end of 2015.

Iowa’s strengthening economy has underscored new challenges requiring innovative solutions. One of the most significant challenges Iowa faces is a shortage of qualified workers to fill middle-skill jobs. Iowa’s plan for achieving success in workforce development systems improvement to meet the needs of tomorrow’s employers relies upon employer-driven policies, strong employer supports and industry-focused solutions. The Labor Market and Information Division (LMI) of Iowa Workforce development (IWD) is tasked with collecting, analyzing, and disseminating a wide array of labor market data and publications for review by Iowa’s business and industry leaders as well as other workforce-related entities. Among them are employment, industry and occupational statistics, wages, projections, trends and other workforce characteristics. This information is reported for the State of Iowa as well as for each local region across the state.

IWD’s Labor Market Information Division (LMI) works in cooperation with the United States Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) along with the United States Census Bureau. The Division also works closely with local economic development and education professionals to provide custom workforce data in an effort to continually evaluate system needs and to inform recommendations for increased capacity. The establishment of Employers’ Councils of Iowa in each region of the State provides another level of input directly from businesses regarding Iowa Workforce Development and One-Stop Center operations. Iowa remains committed to creating and supporting a business climate that results in additional sustainable job growth.

During the 2013 legislative session, The Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund was created with the chief goal of improving the lives of Iowans by helping them get appropriate training to compete for 21st century jobs. An historic \$66,000,000 in annual appropriations was approved to address Iowa’s growing shortage of skilled workers. This fund will assist Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds in acquiring the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for successful access to in-demand jobs. Education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs are beneficiaries of this landmark legislation which exemplifies Iowa’s commitment to advancing job-driven solutions.

Capacity to Meet Future Needs

Iowa’s capacity to meet the evolving needs of the workforce is evidenced in real support through tripled funding to better support Registered Apprenticeship Programs (2014) throughout Iowa. In 2014 year, the Governor established the Home Base Iowa initiative which connects returning veterans with opportunities for careers in Iowa, encourages additional incentives when locating

to specific communities and outlines ways for veterans to continue service in options like the National Guard or Reserves. Created with the goal of increasing STEM interest and achievements, the STEM Council is a collaboration of bipartisan Iowa legislators, educators, business, nonprofits, students and families focused on improving STEM opportunities and awareness in Iowa.

Iowa remains committed to ongoing capacity development aimed at achieving the vision and goals of Iowa's Unified State Plan. Crafting a vision that articulates the needs of many and reflects the values and philosophies of a wide range of partner agencies was important to those involved in writing the plan. The Governor's current goals for the state of Iowa, NGA Talent Pipeline vision and strategies, *Future Ready Iowa*, the current mission of Iowa Workforce Development as well as those from Core partner programs, and many other factors were considered, reviewed, and infused into the vision, goals, and throughout the plan. Further, on October 5, 2015, Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds advanced the Future Ready Iowa initiative by setting a goal of 70% of Iowans having two- and four-year college degrees, certificates, work-based learning opportunities, and other valuable credentials and experiences by 2025.

Iowa is well-poised to provide workforce and talent development activities given the knowledge base of our workforce partners. With system components such as career pathway system which includes bridges and stackable credentials, Registered Apprenticeships, and On-the-Job Training programs that meet industry demands, we continue to pursue avenues for continuous improvement. The capacity of the state talent development system to continue providing workforce development activities is dependent on continued communication among state entities, as established through the WIOA Leadership Team. Equally important is communications between state and workforce development boards to ensure a venue through which refinements can be made.

b. State Strategic Vision and Goals

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. Vision

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Developing a Vision

In developing the goals and strategies of Iowa's Unified State Plan, the Governor's economic goals, Iowa's NGA Talent Pipeline Goals, and stakeholder feedback were incorporated to maximize chances of success, reduce duplication of services, and to ensure effective alignment of all of Iowa's workforce delivery systems. The model advanced by Iowa's Unified State Plan incorporates and aligns all programs, infusing priority of services into each tenet. This system will focus on intensive services for those individuals who face the biggest obstacles in securing and maintaining employment; ensuring that each agency and partner works collaboratively to remove and reduce barriers to all Iowans. The State Board will provide a governing structure and will require state Core Partners to adopt or participate, to the extent appropriate for each

program, the following strategies that frame, align, and guide program coordination at the state, local, and regional levels in order to achieve the state's three goals. Furthermore, the state will provide ongoing evaluation of the system to ensure maximum and consistent effectiveness.

Unified State Plan Vision

Iowa's workforce delivery systems will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa - a pipeline of skilled workers who are prepared to meet the workforce needs of Iowa's current and emerging industries. In alignment with the National Governor's Association Talent Pipeline vision and goals, this unified plan will ensure individuals are prepared for dynamic careers through an emphasis on lifelong learning while meeting the needs of employers. Iowa's workforce delivery system will assist more Iowans to become Future Ready by attaining the "new minimum" of high-quality education, training, and work readiness by bringing together education, rehabilitation, workforce, and economic development resources and ensuring that all Iowans have access to an integrated and efficient workforce delivery system. Future Ready Iowans will be ready to meet the employment challenges of today and into the future so that ALL Iowans work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

2. Goals

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

- A. Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment* and other populations.**
- B. Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

Unified State Plan Goals

Goal I: Iowa's employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and Future Ready workers.

Goal II: All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation.

Goal III: Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

Accessibility

The State of Iowa is committed to providing programs and services in a readily accessible format and delivery method. Accessibility encompasses a variety of ideas, actions, and high-level collaboration. A range of barriers exists for a diversity of populations. System-level barriers such as exclusionary hiring practices and a lack of employer supports, to geographic hindrances and other location-based obstacles are inherent within the workforce delivery system. For instance, individuals living in Iowa's many rural communities experience higher levels of isolation, have limited access to available and affordable transportation, are not offered the same educational and training opportunities, and often lack personal and professional support networks and essential services. Adding to the mix is the job seeker's ability to gain skills due to a real or environmentally imposed restriction.

Recognizing the variety of barriers and restrictions imposed upon job seekers and workers, the State of Iowa is committed, regardless of language skills, age, location, ability, legal history, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, or socio-economic background may gain access. Access may require reasonable accommodations, natural and programmatic supports, intensive services, and creative methods to address the actual or perceived impediment toward meaningful access. Any individual who is seeking services from the workforce system will receive the appropriate, reasonable, and needed accommodation or support. All goals, strategies and actions inherently infuse options for accommodations and accessibility such that all Iowan's may be provided the necessary supports to be successful in achieving their employment goal. The plan goals, strategies and activities presume and require all core partners to provide the necessary services, support, modification or accommodation for ALL Iowan's to be successful. All entities responsible for Iowa's workforce services delivery system will work together to support and encourage a fully accessible and accommodated workforce system that works for ALL Iowans.

Sector Partnerships

The State of Iowa will support the development of statewide and/or regionally based, employer-driven sector initiatives. Sector strategies address the needs of employers through a focus on the workforce needs of specific employer sectors over a specific time period. While working to address the needs of employers, the needs of workers will also be met through the creation of formal career paths to self-sustaining jobs, reduction of barriers to employment, and sustained or increased jobs. Sector partnerships bolster regional economic competitiveness by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic, and workforce delivery systems.

Systemic change that achieves ongoing benefits for employers and job-seekers, a broad diversity of stakeholders must be engaged through formal, organized sector partnerships.

Career Pathways

Career Pathways are components of sector strategies. Career Pathways support workers' transitions from training and education into the workforce and into an eventual self-sustaining career. Career Pathways work to increase education, training and learning opportunities for the current and future workforce. Career Pathways help job-seekers develop personal, technical, and employability skills which prepare job-seekers for in-demand and lasting jobs. Colleges, primary and secondary schools, economic development agencies, workforce services providers, employers, labor groups and social service providers all play a vital role in the successful development of Career Pathways approaches. A baseline survey of sector partnerships and career pathways has been completed that will form the foundation for developing career pathways moving forward.

Integration

Delivering workforce services that are better aligned to meet the needs of ALL system beneficiaries is the overarching aim of Iowa's integration strategies. A fully integrated and well-aligned system is one that prepares Iowa's employers with the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to grow a Future Ready workforce and empowers job-seekers and workers with skills, experiences, and opportunities needed to obtain and maintain self-sustaining employment.

Integrated Education and Training

Integrated education and training opportunities will allow for the creation of a Future Ready workforce that prepares ALL Iowans to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's jobs. With improved accessibility and alignment of systems, ALL Iowans will be able to participate in the education and training opportunities that support the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for rewarding careers.

Activities to support integrated education and training strategies will align with the NGA Talent Pipeline/Future Ready Initiative recommendations as well as with concepts within the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce report. A youth-focused work group will be convened by the Core Partners and key stakeholders. Individuals and small businesses will be given guidance on business enterprises, asset development, and benefits planning throughout the start-up, operations and maintenance phases of entrepreneurial pursuits.

3. Performance Goals

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

Reduced Federal Budgets

Reduced federal budgets have impacted Iowa Workforce Development in the past several years as well as local service providers providing workforce services. State and local service providers have operated with reduced staffing progressively over the past several years and as increased numbers of customers are served.

Fully integrated service delivery

Since program year 2010, Iowa workforce development and partners have worked to improve delivery of services by implementation of integrated service delivery in one-stop locations. By July 1, 2013, all regions had implemented the integrated service delivery model providing core, intensive (WIA) and training services to increased numbers of individuals in both the Adult and Dislocated worker programs. Although this marked a time of improved service delivery reaching increased number of participants, the more recently integrated One Stop Centers continue working to improve processes and efforts have been made to improve reporting reflecting full integration of all individuals reported in outcomes. Participation numbers reflect an increase of 40,000 individuals served through the WIA Adult program and a 2/3rds increase in the dislocated worker program since pre-integration numbers served in 2009 however efforts are in process for improved reporting of outcomes and identifying exiters of these increased participant numbers at core level services captured.

Agricultural and Economic impact

Iowa's largely agricultural economy was impacted by severe weather and extreme conditions. Severe weather, unseasonable temperatures and field conditions affect farm yields, and impact such industries as seed dealers, feed stores, co-ops, implement dealerships, repair shops to Ethanol plants and local economies as personal rural spending decreases. Iowa's agricultural economies of the past several years to include drought conditions in 2012, natural disasters by spring of 2013 as well as 2014 and 2015 as a result of severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding continue to recover due to these multiple year disaster events and declarations.

Agriculture benefits Iowa Economy:

An Iowa State University study in 2009 indicated Iowa's largely agricultural efforts contribute to the state's economy by 27% of the state's total or \$72.1 billion when "production agriculture and ag-related industries directly and indirectly employ one of every six Iowans." The study showed that diversification of farming had made agriculture the leading industry in more than a quarter of the counties in our state and that agriculture related jobs account for over 50 percent of employment in 20 Iowa counties and jobs associated with meat production and meat processing make up over 30 percent of the ag-related workforce in 30 Iowa counties.

Agriculture has historically been and continues to be the leading economic driver in the state of Iowa. The agricultural economy has been severely impacted by drastically reduced commodity prices. In many instances, commodity prices are less than previous levels of recent years. This results in not only reduced consumer spending, impacting retail trade, but also impacts those businesses directly related to Iowa's agricultural economy such as seed, fertilizer, herbicides and grain dealers. The current farm economy

has already impacted the manufacturing sector as evidenced by mass layoff by several of our leading agriculture manufacturers in the state in recent years.

Baseline data for new WIOA performance measures.

WIA employment performance measurement excluded those employed at the time of participation in the program. WIOA performance includes all participants employed, underemployed and not employed. This was anticipated to have increased employment outcomes slightly however heading into Program year 16 performance negotiations, with WIOA implementation underway in program year 15. WIA measures for Entered Employment measured employment attained following services from WIA program in the first quarter after exit. WIOA measures employment in the second quarter after exit. The variance between measuring employment second quarter under WIOA from first quarter (WIA), reported insignificant variances indicating individuals remaining employed for at least six months following services from WIOA.

The most significant impact was the measurement of employment fourth quarter. WIA measured employment retention third quarter after exit from services. Employment fourth quarter outcomes (WIOA) result in dramatically lower outcomes than those reported under WIA in Retention (third quarter employment). For these reasons, employment second quarter goals should remain similar to first quarter goals with the exception given to now including employed individuals in the performance measurement calculations while employment fourth quarter goals should be set much lower than employment second quarter.

Wagner Peyser services provide basic career services to all individuals seeking services. This includes employed, not employed, underemployed, having not completed high school education, no education beyond high school (or equivalent) and individuals with post-secondary degrees and vocational credentials. WIOA Title I services provide services to individuals with barriers and multiple barriers to employment; the most in need; the hardest to serve. Title I employment outcomes will result in lower outcomes than Wagner Peyser and employment goals determined should reflect accordingly. The variance between Average Earnings reported under WIA and Median Earnings results in much lower outcomes. Median Earnings should reflect Title I Adult with the lower goal, W-P with a slightly higher goal and dislocated worker are anticipated to be able to rejoin the workforce with slightly higher wages due to significant work history.

Due to PY16 designated as the WIOA transition year for reporting performance outcomes, some outcomes only report partial data for the baseline to aid in determining PY18 and PY19 goals as one avenue from PY17 actuals (PY16 reported no outcomes due to the transition). As a result, Program year 2018 (PY18) goals are based on only partial baseline data available and in some instances, some performance outcomes baseline data is not currently available (employment fourth quarter and credential attainment (through PY17, 2nd quarter reporting)) prior to the performance goal justification submission deadline as part of the state plan modification.

Iowa maintains a strong co-enrollment policy to encourage blending and braiding of WIOA funds. For this reason, Wagner-Peyser goals set should always be close to or slightly higher than the goals set for Title I Adult. WIOA Title I Adult serving the hardest

to serve should be slightly lower goals than W-P. DW's that are usually being served are established employees with higher rates of pay and longer work histories tend to get reemployed quickly and the median wage is higher than other areas such as Title I Adult or Wagner-Peyser. With Iowa Co-Enrollment policy, Title I Adult and W-P should be similar goals/rates at minimum or as previously indicate, WIOA Title I Adult employment second quarter should be set at a rate lower than that of Wagner-Peyser.

Iowa is in the process of development of a new data collection and management system with WIOA fully incorporated. With implementation of a new data management system, Iowa intends reporting improvements to continue into PY18 and PY19.

Appendix 1 is available at the end of this document.

4. Assessment

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Iowa will make use of many activities to assess the successful provision of workforce services and the delivery of the Governor's strategic vision and goals. Efforts at integrated performance reporting, cross-system data alignment and systems interoperability will develop over the course of the four-year plan and are contingent on negotiated agreement among the State Plan partners. The activities discussed below all play a role in ensuring that the state is able to make continuous and quality improvements in terms of adhering to federal and state regulations, providing quality services to the workforce system customer, and meeting federal and state outcome expectations.

With a common set of workforce performance measures for the core partners, reports will enable workforce program administrators and policy makers to identify best practices and improve the effectiveness of Iowa's workforce development programs. Future development of a dashboard of key indicators for local areas to access and compare success through non-personal identifiable information will stimulate dialogue and sharing of procedures, particularly across providers of similar size and economic composition. It is anticipated that for each region, the dashboard would report the number of individuals completing the program, the number of completers subsequently employed, their median earnings, employment stability, post-secondary or training enrollment, and education and training credentials earned. The workforce performance measures evaluate program efforts to:

- Provide job seekers with access to training that results in industry-recognized credentials;
- Connect individuals to short- and long-term employment;
- Increase participants' overall earnings; and
- Meet the needs of employers.

In addition to these measures, the state will continue to further implement additional regional level measures to achieving progress toward sector partnerships and career pathway development. These will include the following:

- efforts to track the development and expansion of sector partnerships throughout the state, by region and focus;
- a regional enumeration - the number of middle-skill industry-valued and recognized postsecondary credentials awarded in the region; and
- TBD training-related employment by occupation and or sector, to assess whether training and education programs are leading to employment in relevant occupational fields or industry sectors following program exit to measure post-program success and to aid in determining impact from labor market dynamics.

The state is developing a cross-agency team consisting of core partners, to annually review progress toward integration, One-Stop Certification, adherence to common regional board policies and risk assessment. Initially this review will assess One-Stop partners on whether they are meeting baseline federal requirements pertaining to co-location, cross-training, and meaningful virtual access to services in at least one comprehensive One-Stop in each local area. While this review will not be program specific it will include interviews to ensure understanding of regulations and the cohesiveness of local processes. Recommendations on the criteria to be used in this review are being developed through the One-Stop Design workgroup, convened by the State Board for the purpose of WIOA implementation including representatives from all core programs and other state and local partners in the One-Stop system and is charged with identifying and disseminating information on best practices relating to business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, identifying and responding to implementation challenges, and providing policy recommendations to the State Board to guide the effective operation of the One-Stop system in Iowa. The criteria are supported with the development of the “One-Stop System Standards” by the workgroup. These standards and reviews help to ensure that all customers are able to access and receive the services they need in the most efficient manner possible. Criteria will include all of the following assessments at a minimum:

- Leadership, planning and collaboration (how well are core programs involved and aligned?),
- Customer-focus and customer-centered design (do clients get the services they need?),
- Manner in which the One-Stop will enable skills attainment leading to industry recognized credentials and degrees (does the One-Stop help move those with barriers to employment on a path to skills development?),
- Use of data for continuous improvement (do One-Stop operators utilize performance data to improve service delivery?),
- Professional development and staff capacity building,
- Employer engagement and focus on high growth sectors,
- Environmental, programmatic and technological accessibility of the One-Stop (is the facility accessible, visible, capable of meeting the needs of many populations.

The cross agency team will also ensure that each board meets composition requirements and that meetings are being conducted correctly, providing consistency across the state. This consistency ensures that each region is able to carry out the Governor's vision as outlined in their local plan in the most effective manner.

The final way in which the State ensures effectiveness is through the development and delivery of a core partner customer satisfaction survey. The cross-agency team and policy work group will prepare and facilitate a survey of at least 500 past participants. Once the data is collected the results will be detailed in a summative report. The team will also analyze the data to identify areas in which the workforce development system can improve the customer experience and outcomes. If needed, those recommendations will be distributed to regions for revisions to local plans. By focusing on customer experience, the workforce development system will ensure positive outcomes and word-of-mouth referrals. These testimonials are necessary to ensure that customers have access and will continue to seek services.

c. State Strategy

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes registered apprenticeship. "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

Sector Partnership Toolkit

Iowa's response to sector partnership has been to build on existing promising practices. Sector partnerships are major components of Iowa's Unified State Plan and *A Future Ready Iowa*. A collaborative effort by the state to provide guidance and training on sector partnerships has resulted in a series of toolkits. The toolkit was produced through a partnership with the Department of Education and Iowa Workforce Development using funds made available by a grant from the Department of Labor in conjunction with Iowa Central Community College as a collaborator and partner. The toolkits are not exhaustive but aimed at preparing the state and regions to make data-informed critical decisions in planning, emerging, and sustaining sector partnerships. By identifying the evolution and processes associated with effective sector partnerships, Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC), a business-driven state-sponsored association, promotes a stream-lined workforce talent pipeline along with robust career pathways that link the needs of the employers with all Iowans. Each section in this toolkit contains a narrative,

key points, an activity or checklist to practice the principle associated with each partnership, and a self-assessment that helps to evaluate progress and next steps.

Data Use in Sector Partnerships

The report also contains current data critical to developing robust sector partnerships in different regions throughout Iowa. For regions to prioritize targeted industries for growth and development of partnerships, they must keep the following common data points in mind for regional impact: Sector partnerships are composed of industries with shared needs, as well as various education, workforce, economic, and community organizations in supportive roles. Data helps to provide a baseline, but it is not the only consideration. In addition, sector partnerships operate within labor market regions and are not confined to municipal, county, educational, or even state boundaries. Reviewing the data by applying the step-by-step guide will help determine the best scope and size of a sector partnership. But lags, gaps, too little data, or too much data may create limitations. Consider the data as a starting point for future conversations with employers.

A review of information provided by EMSI (a composite, unsuppressed), and up-to-date labor market information database and analytical modeling tool available regionally through Enhance Iowa) about occupations, worker skills, commuting patterns, and other relevant data reveals Iowa's top industries, which include Construction with 99,778 total jobs in 2015; Healthcare with 203,505 total jobs in 2015; and Finance and Insurance with 95,215 total jobs in 2015. Growth between 2010 and 2015 is expected to increase by 24%, 22%, and 18% respectively.

The Sector Partnerships Toolkit can be accessed in its entirety by going to:
<https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Sector%20Partnerships%20Toolkit%201.0%20Planning.pdf>

One Door Many Paths: A WIOA Partners' Conference

The "One Door, Many Paths" Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Conference was held on June 27-28, 2016, at the Prairie Meadows Conference Center in Altoona, Iowa. This was Iowa's first jointly facilitated conference by Iowa Workforce Development, the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Association of Iowa Workforce Partners in partnership with several other key state agencies and community partners. The conference was held to discuss ways to streamline workforce services for Iowans and find solutions to reduce Iowa's skills gap. The conference also addressed how to help Iowans who are unemployed or underemployed and those with significant barriers to employment. More than 500 attendees had the opportunity to explore areas related to career pathways, employer development, public and private partnership and building sector strategies.

During the conference, sector partnerships toolkit was released in an effort to provide guidance and training on sector partnership development. This is the first in a series of toolkits that aims to prepare the state and regions to make data-informed critical decisions in planning, emerging, and sustaining sector partnerships. Each section in the first toolkit contains a narrative, key points, an activity or checklist to practice the principle associated with each partnership, and a self-assessment that helps to evaluate progress and next steps. This publication was produced through a partnership with the Department

of Education and Iowa Workforce Development using funds made available by a grant from the Department of Labor. Special thanks to Iowa Central Community College for their collaboration and partnership.

Current Policy

Iowa provides support for local sector partnerships through its Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE) program. Funding: Iowa's PACE program funds partnerships between community colleges, industry, and nonprofits, with the community college serving as the grant recipient. While the PACE program is not limited to sector partnerships, PACE funds may be used to support the development and implementation of regional industry sector partnerships. In 2015, Iowa appropriated \$5 million for PACE, with awards made to all 15 community colleges through a funding formula. The Iowa statute (Iowa Code 260H.7B) that established PACE identifies sector partnerships as a potential element of PACE programs, and lists activities that may be carried out by sector partnerships.

Future Direction

To strengthen the development and ongoing implementation of Iowa's sector strategies and career pathway systems, the Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) will serve as a standing committee to the State Workforce Development Board and will have the following attributes:

Planned membership includes broad education, vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, economic development and business and industry association representatives. The Council will include the following attributes at a minimum:

- Business led and oriented;
- Tasked to provide state level leadership, support, policy development, coordination and guidance to regional sector partnership development;
- In charge of convening an annual statewide workshop for regional sector partnerships from across the state to share best practices and promote statewide collaboration;
- Provision of technical assistance to the regional sector partnerships;
- The Council will serve as an advisory committee to the State Board of Directors to help fulfill WIOA requirements.

Development and Maintenance of a statewide data base for sector partnerships and career pathways will give participants access to regional hot jobs based on in-demand and emerging industry. Funding is being leveraged from multiple departments, with a mix of state and federal funds and is coordinated through Iowa's Future Ready Initiative.

Training sessions for sector partnership facilitators will be conducted by recognized national sector partnership consultants and are being scheduled in 2016 to develop a statewide pool of trained, professional facilitators to provide technical assistance and support in the development of regional sector partnerships.

Funding from the 260H PACE Career Pathways annual appropriation from the Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund will be pursued to support ongoing sector

partnership and career pathway development activities in Iowa. The Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges will be responsible for staffing and supporting this effort through the Sector Partnership Leadership Council.

Common Definitions

Sector Partnership

A sector partnership is a workforce collaborative that organizes key stakeholders and targeted industry partners into a sustainable working group that focuses on the long-term workforce needs of a targeted industry cluster. Membership in the sector partnership is determined by the targeted industry partners. Sector partnerships operate within a true labor market region and are not confined to particular workforce, education, or similar regional boundaries. The term industry partners means a concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, research and development entities, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are linked by common workforce needs. Sector support partners work to meet the skill, recruitment, and retention needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. By meeting the needs of sector partnerships on behalf of industry, jobseekers, and workers, sector support partners strengthen a region's overall economic vitality. Support partners should include entities such as:

- local government;
- local economic development agencies;
- local agencies;
- chambers of commerce;
- nonprofit organizations;
- philanthropic organizations;
- community service agencies;
- economic development organizations;
- industry associations;
- labor organizations, except in instances where no labor representation exists;
- representatives of local boards;
- representatives of K-12, adult education, and postsecondary educational institutions or other training providers; and
- representatives of state workforce agencies or other entities providing employment services; and representatives of other, related regional sector partnerships.

Key roles in the development and implementation of a sector partnership is that of the convener and facilitator or facilitating team. A convener is a credible entity in a position to identify regional economic and labor needs and convene industry and support partners to develop strategies which address the identified regional needs. A facilitator or facilitating team is a neutral, credible, and trained entity tasked with ensuring the ongoing operation and sustainability of a sector partnership. Accordingly, the facilitator assists in introducing options which address identified regional needs, distinguishing resource needs and funding sources, and other activities vital to the functioning of the sector partnership. The facilitator is not the sector partnership leader, a position which should be

designated upon a partnership member. Rather, a facilitator works closely with the partnership leader to accomplish the aforementioned tasks. A convener and facilitator may be the same entity - i.e., the convener may assume the facilitator role - if that entity possesses the appropriate capacities to fully perform in both roles.

Mature Sector Partnership:

- has a clear neutral facilitator or facilitating team;
- is led by industry, as demonstrated by industry sector members playing leadership roles (chairperson, etc.), who are committed to the long term sustainability of the sector partnership;
- has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
- includes critical and engaged support partners across programs from workforce development economic development, education, community organizations and others. Sector partnership actively communicates and collaborates with regional Workforce Investment Board(s);
- operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area, community college boundary, or other boundaries;
- operates under a shared, long-term strategic plan, road map, etc.;
- has developed at least one effective, employer validated career pathway in support of a target industry cluster based on mapping knowledge, skills and abilities, and skill attainment at multiple entry and exit points;
- has clear, identified priorities and is able to demonstrate recent (within the past six months) or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership, including, but not limited to the design and implementation, with employers of work-based learning models in targeted sector(s); on-the-job training; cooperative education; paid internships and; pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship programs; and
- has common agreed-upon dashboard of success indicators (i.e. consensus around sector partnership “outcomes”) determined in part by indicators needed to bring about system changes.

Emerging Sector Partnership:

- has at least an interim independent facilitator or facilitating team;
- has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
- includes support partners from workforce development, education, economic development, and other programs or organizations in strategic roles. Is developing the capacity to engage in active communication and collaboration with regional Workforce Investment Board(s);
- can say with confidence when the partnership is expected to “launch;” and
- engaged in networking with mature sector partnerships.

Planning:

- determining whether the partnership really makes sense for their community;
- considering or preparing for actions needed to launch a partnership, but has not committed to the formation of a sector partnership; and
- working to identify partners who would be involved.

Career Pathway:

A career pathway consists of structured course sequences which organize rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services related to a targeted industry cluster to meet the education and skill needs of the region and state, and the particular needs of an individual, all in the context of workforce preparation. This is achieved through collaboration between industry partners and support partners within a sector partnership.

A career pathway must include advising and support services which identify education and career needs and goals to meet the needs of individuals with or without the need for relevant and reasonable accommodations. To meet the needs of all individuals, a career pathway must be equipped to effectively:

- enable an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least one recognized postsecondary credential;
- prepare an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary and postsecondary education options, including Registered Apprenticeships; and
- help an individual enter and advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Attention must be given to strategies and approaches which accelerate the educational postsecondary credential attainment and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable. Such strategies must include, but is not limited to, the concurrent delivery of adult education and eligible postsecondary education programs, and “bridge” curricula which connects adult and basic education to workforce preparation programs and integrates education and training to allow students to advance in their education and employment.

A career pathway system is the cohesive combination of sector partnerships, resources and funding, policies, data, and shared accountability measures that support the development, quality, scaling, and sustainability of career pathways for youth and adults. As such, a career pathway system is a long-term objective for which all sector partnerships should strive. A career pathway system is an overarching frame and is not couched within any one public education, workforce, or other system; however, one system may take the lead on developing the career pathway. The value of a career pathway system is that it is not created in a vacuum, but connects and aligns all other related public systems to each other and to private and non-profit partners.

Addendum - May 30, 2018

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) proposed a department policy bill this legislative session that was supported by the Iowa Department of Education and the Governor. Because IWD is the state grant recipient of the federal grants for the WIOA Title I Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs and a required statewide employment and

training activities for those programs is assisting local workforce development areas by providing information on and support for the effective development, convening, and implementation of industry and sector partnerships, one of the provisions in the legislation would make IWD the lead state agency in charge of the development and oversight of industry or sector partnerships. After lobbyists advocated for an amendment to the legislation, the General Assembly adopted an amendment to the bill so that IWD is not the agency with primary responsibility for the performance of this required statewide employment and training activity under the WIOA Title I Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs even though IWD is the state grant recipient for those programs.

Despite the amendment, the legislation included other provisions to help bring Iowa into compliance with WIOA in the development and expansion of industry and sector partnerships. The legislation that IWD proposed and the legislature enacted includes adding a new provision to the Iowa Code that makes the definition of “industry or sector partnership” the same as the one in WIOA section 3(26). The bill also amended the provisions of the Iowa Code that govern Local Workforce Development Boards so that the functions of Local WDBs are the same as those in WIOA section 107(d), including the requirement in WIOA section 107(d)(4)(D) that the Local WDB must lead efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers and with entities in the region involved to develop and implement proven or promising strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers and employers (such as the establishment of industry and sector partnerships), that provided the skilled workforce need by employers in the region, and that expand the employment and career advancement opportunities for workforce development system participants in in-demand industry sectors or occupations. This builds on the foundation for WIOA compliance that the legislature enacted during the 2017 legislative session to bring the provisions of the Iowa Code that govern the membership and functions of the State Workforce Development Board into compliance with WIOA, including the requirement that the State Workforce Development assist the Governor in the development and expansion of industry and sector partnerships, as required in WIOA section 101(d)(3).

Moving forward IWD is committed to collaborating with the Iowa Department of Education in an effort to ensure WIOA compliance in the development of industry or sector partnerships in the State.

2. Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).

Alignment Strategies

Core Partners and other key service providers have been designing policies around the following strategies which were developed collaboratively among the partners and other relevant stakeholders. Core Partners have been meeting on a regular basis to ensure that planning efforts are truly partner centric and reflective of the requirements of those who are most at-need within the workforce delivery system in Iowa.

Strategies to Achieve Accessibility

The Workforce System Partners will work with Iowa's employers to identify and reduce barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. The partnership will expand accessible opportunities for populations which have been traditionally underserved or underrepresented, and those who have one or more barriers to sustainable employment. Alignment and systems improve will help ensure accessibility to ALL Iowans.

Activities to support accessibility strategies will include the ongoing identification, and proactive reduction of barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. Workforce System Partners will develop policies and implement procedures to ensure continuing and unhindered access to Iowa jobs for ALL Iowans.

Strategies to Support Sector Partnerships

The Core Partners and key stakeholders will collaborate to engage employers in the continuous development of programs and initiatives that are responsive to Iowa's current and future labor-market needs and to significantly expand mature sector partnership activity throughout the state, applying demand-driven methodology.

Activities to support sector partnership strategies include working with employers to increase opportunities for all Iowans to gain the experience, skills, and credentials needed to obtain and maintain self-sustaining employment, closing skill gaps between Iowa's workforce and employers by expanding and supporting sector strategies for in-demand industries. Identifying and quantifying employers' education, training, and workforce needs will be a priority. Capturing those needs in a Talent Supply & Demand Dashboard to be driven by a public-private collaborative and disseminated via an accessible computer system will further support Iowa's sector partnerships. The core partners will infuse innovative strategies throughout service delivery to enhance integration opportunities for individuals with significant barriers to employment and to increase chances of attaining successful competitive employment.

Strategies to Support Career Pathways

ALL Iowans will be engaged in the career pathway development process by utilizing innovative approaches in the delivery of career services and offering a variety of career pathway navigation supports to enhance transition into the workforce.

Activities to support career pathways strategies will be the development of an interagency definition of "self-sustaining employment." Workforce delivery systems will work in concert to provide workers with the skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed through the systematic development of career pathways for in-demand industries. ALL Iowans will have access to the occupational and training resources and skills needed to work to their fullest potential and to secure and maintain self-sustaining employment.

Strategies to Support Integration

The quality of workforce development services will be improved through the provision of consistent, integrated, and non-duplicative services across education, rehabilitation, economic and workforce activities and a focused communication strategy. Activities to support integration strategies will involve the creation of a service delivery model which is business-driven, user-friendly, data-driven and dynamic enough to meet the evolving needs of employers. Duplication of services and gaps within the current workforce delivery system will be identified. Policies and collaborative agreements will be drafted and implemented which maximize resources that foster a unified and consistent approach to the provision of workforce delivery services.

Technology and Integration

An accessible data collection effort will streamline data collection processes, increase efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aid in accurate performance measurement for decision making. The state will work to minimize the participatory burden to an accessible system through the creation and implementation of a common intake and reporting system among Core Partners and relevant agencies. A robust policy will be adopted to ease transitions within and across systems and programs using a referral process that allows for direct connection among partners and providers, and holds agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success and navigating the system.

Policy and Integration

The state will establish an Iowa Sector Partnership & Leadership Council that is demand-side driven to provide cross-industry, cross-employer, and cross-agency leadership in the development and support of mature sector partnerships and holistic career pathways. Furthermore, the state will engage Iowa's employment leaders in the development and delivery of workforce services across Iowa. Previously compiled career pathway work is holistic and not institutionally biased - i.e. does not include just the programming of one service provider. The state will bring a diversity of stakeholders together to review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa's current and future workforce. A center piece of this collaborative effort will be a policy council advising the State Board on proven and promising practices and policies that support an integrated system responsive to labor market needs. Statewide policies will be developed that support Iowa's businesses in offering creative and nontraditional in-roads to careers that meet the needs of ALL Iowans.

Benefits and services to Iowa's job seekers, employees and employers will be maximized through the intentional braiding, integrating and seeking out of diverse funding streams. One-Stop Centers operate under an advanced training certification program to ensure all centers are accessible, operating consistently and that staff have access to the same knowledge, resources, and supports across the state that ensures:

- Professional Development
- Consistent staff training,
- Intra-agency cross training,

- Eligible Training Provider List access and training, and
- Advanced technology.

In-demand career opportunities and career pathways will be communicated to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including creation of a dashboard of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.

Strategies to Support Integrated Education and Training

To accomplish integrated education and training, Iowa's key workforce delivery system partners must:

- Ensure that ALL Iowans have full access and direct connection to programs that work to address essential components of reading instruction and literacy,
- Create affordable options for workers to obtain education, training, skills, including personal, soft, and basic skills, and financial literacy, necessary to secure and maintain self-sustaining employment, and
- Develop opportunities for ALL Iowans to develop entrepreneurial skills and concepts while providing opportunities for connection with Iowa business leaders.

The State Board requires that Core Partners adopt or participate, to the extent appropriate for each program, several strategies that will frame, align and guide program coordination to achieve the state's vision and goals. Under WIOA, one-stop centers and their partners are considered Iowa's local One-Stop System and are tasked with performing the following:

- providing job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages;
- providing access and opportunities to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers
- empowering businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce;
- participating in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of one-stop centers by identifying which strategies work better for different populations; and
- ensuring high-quality, integrated and data-informed decisions made by policymakers, employers, and job seekers.

In order for Iowa's One Stop System to accomplish these tasks and to effectively develop a Future Ready Iowa to meet the ever changing demands of Iowa's economy, Iowa has developed workgroups to ensure high-quality customer service, avoid duplication of programs and activities, and developed a system to ensure that all customers receive the services they need. Through the One Stop System certification process, Iowa's Core Partners are working to ensure continuous quality improvement (needs something better

here) of our comprehensive and dynamic system to ensure that the needs of our economy are met and that ALL Iowans are Future Ready and work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

Iowa's One Stop System has developed the following Strategies and action steps to align and strengthen programs and system partnerships:

Iowa will improve the quality of workforce development services through the provision of consistent, integrated, and non-duplicative services across education, rehabilitation, economic and workforce activities. The following action steps will be taken:

- Create a service delivery model which is business-driven, user-friendly, data-drive and meets the evolving needs of employers
- Identify duplication of services and gaps within the current workforce delivery system and draft policies and collaborative agreements to maximize resources that foster a more unified and consistent approach to the provision of workforce delivery services.
- Implement an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision-making.
- Minimize the participatory burden to an accessible system through the creation and implementation of a common intake and reporting system among core partners and relevant agencies.
- Develop a referral process that allows for direct connection by and between key agency staff, which includes holding agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success.
- Establish a Sector Partnership & Career Pathway Advisory Council to serve as cross agency leadership in the development and support of sector partnerships and career pathways.
- Engage Iowa's employment leaders in the development and delivery of workforce services across Iowa.
- Bring a diversity of stakeholders (Policy Council) together to review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa's current and future workforce.
- Create statewide policies that support Iowa's businesses in offering creative and non-traditional in-roads to careers that meet the needs of ALL Iowans.
- Braid, integrate and seek diverse funding streams to maximize benefits and services to Iowa's job seekers, employees and employers.

Develop a communication plan across all Core, regional, and local partners to ensure information is shared. The following action steps will be taken:

- Intra-agency cross training will be completed on a continuous basis to ensure high quality services and referrals to the appropriate core partners.
- Eligible Training Provider List
- Technology component

- Communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including a dashboard of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.
- Create an advanced training certification program of the One-Stop Center to ensure all One-Stop centers are accessible and operating consistently and that staff have access to the knowledge, resources and supports across the state.
- Identify liaisons between core and required partners to ensure a quality experience for customers accessing multiple services.

The core partners have been developing pilot projects in coordination with other workforce-related initiatives such as Future Ready Iowa and the Governor's increased commitment to work-based learning models. This planning and coordination is ongoing and will continue as part of Iowa's strategy to align required and optional programs now and into the future.

III. Operational Planning Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. State Strategy Implementation

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. State Board Functions

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e. provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

State Board Functions

Iowa's State Board membership structure is in Iowa Code chapter 84A. In June 2015, Gov. Branstad sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Labor seeking recognition of the State Board as an alternative entity under WIOA section 101(e). Iowa did not receive a response from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) until June 29, 2016, when the Departments of Labor and Education (Departments) rejected Iowa's State Board membership structure as described in Iowa's Unified State Plan (USP). The Departments' letter was the first indication that the membership structure of the State Board did not qualify as an alternative entity under WIOA section 101(e).

IWD worked diligently to constitute a WIOA-compliant State Board in accordance with the Iowa Constitution and Iowa Code. First, the Iowa Code had to be amended. Immediately after receipt of the Departments' letter, IWD drafted a legal memorandum that detailed the membership structure requirements in WIOA section 101(b) and

distributed it to the State Board, Governor's office, legislators, partner agencies, and other stakeholders. After that, IWD met with stakeholders, including members of the Governor's office, the State Board, legislators from both parties and chambers, business organizations, and labor organizations. IWD advised all stakeholders of the requirements for State Board membership under WIOA section 101(b). IWD kept the U.S. Department of Labor's Region 5 office updated on these efforts.

Based on conversations with stakeholders and public officials, IWD drafted legislation to amend the Iowa Code to change Iowa's State Board membership structure to comply with WIOA section 101(b). IWD legislative liaisons shepherded this legislation through both chambers of the Iowa General Assembly. The bill passed the Iowa House by an 88-9 vote and the Iowa Senate by a 49-0 vote. Former Gov. Branstad signed IWD's State Board membership structure bill into law on April 13, 2017.

In April, the U.S. Senate confirmed former Gov. Branstad as Ambassador to China and, at the end of May, then-Lt. Gov. Reynolds became Gov. Reynolds. IWD assisted the Governor's office in recruiting new members to the State Board. Gov. Reynolds appointed the requisite members to a WIOA-compliant State Board and the first meeting of Iowa's fully transitioned State Board took place on November 20, 2017.

Percentage Share of Voting Members

WIOA imposes requirements with respect to the percentage share of the State Board's voting membership that representatives of business and the workforce must have. Representatives of business must make up a majority of the State Board's voting membership. Representatives of the workforce (i.e., representatives of labor organizations, community-based organizations, and joint labor-management Registered Apprenticeship Programs) must make up at least 20 percent of the State Board's voting membership.

Due to the requirements of WIOA, including the percentage share requirements, Iowa's State Board's voting membership had to grow from nine voting members to 33 voting members. The State Board meets the WIOA requirements with respect to the percentage share that representatives of business and the workforce must have:

- 17 representatives of business make up 51.5% of the State Board's voting membership; and
- 7 representatives of the workforce make up 21.2% of the State Board's voting membership.

Representatives of the Workforce

The representatives of the workforce consist of:

- 4 representatives of labor organizations;
- 2 representatives of community-based organizations; and
- 1 representative of a joint labor-management Registered Apprenticeship program, who is a training director.

State Elected Officials

The State Board has the following state elected officials as voting members:

- The Governor;
- 1 state senator from the Iowa Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate after consultation with the Majority Leader of the Senate; and
- 1 state representative from the Iowa House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives after consultation with the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.

Local Chief Elected Officials

The State Board has the following local chief elected officials:

- 1 member of a county board of supervisors; and
- 1 mayor.

Representatives of the Government

The WIOA final rules require that, where the lead official represents more than one core program, that official must ensure adequate representation of the needs of all core programs under his or her jurisdiction. The WIOA final rules also allow that, where one state agency administers multiple required programs, the head of that agency may represent those programs on the State Board. 20 CFR section 679.100(d)(iii)(A) contains the list of required representatives of the Government, which includes “lead State officials with primary responsibility” for the core programs:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs under WIOA Title I and the Wagner-Peyser Act;
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program authorized under WIOA Title II; and
- State Vocational Rehabilitation program authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV.

In Iowa, there are two distinct Vocational Rehabilitation programs. One is administered by the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) and one is administered by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), which is a division of the Iowa Department of Education. The Administrator of IVRS is a voting member on the State Board under Iowa law.

The State Board has the following four representatives of Government who are responsible for representing the following WIOA core programs:

- Director of IWD, who represents the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs under WIOA Title I and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program under WIOA Title III;
- Director of the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), who represents the Vocational Rehabilitation program administered by IDB under WIOA Title IV;

- Administrator of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), who represents the Vocational Rehabilitation program administered by IVRS under WIOA Title IV; and
- Director of the Iowa Department of Education, who represents the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program under WIOA Title II.

Some of these representatives represent more programs their respective core programs on the State Board. This is necessary to achieve the purposes of WIOA and the State Board and expressly authorized by 20 CFR section 679.100(f)(3), which states that a State Board member may not serve as a representative of more than core program “except where a single government agency is responsible for multiple required programs, the head of the agency may represent each of the required programs.” In Iowa, the Director of IWD and Director of the Iowa Department of Education are the heads of agencies that are responsible for multiple required programs.

In addition to the WIOA Title I programs and Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program, the Director of IWD represents the following programs and grants that are administered by the agency:

- Unemployment insurance (UI);
- Reemployment (RES and RESEA);
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG);
- PROMISE JOBS, the State’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Employment and Training program, which IWD administers in partnership with the Iowa Department of Human Services;
- Trade Act Assistance (TAA);
- Ticket to Work (TTW);
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW);
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC);
- Federal Disability Employment Initiative Round 6 grant, which IWD administers in partnership with Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC);
- Federal Apprenticeship Expansion grant;
- Home Base Iowa; and
- State Offender and Ex-Offender Re-Entry.

In addition to the AEFLA program under WIOA Title II, the Director of the Iowa Department of Education also represents the following programs that are administered by the agency:

- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education; and
- State Kindergarten through 12th grade programs, such as the Statewide Work-Based Learning Intermediary Network.

Iowa Code section 260C.50 is entitled “Adult education and literacy programs.” Iowa Code section 260C.50(2) states, “The [Iowa D]epartment [of Education] and the community colleges shall jointly implement adult education and literacy programs to assist adults and youths sixteen years of age and older who are not in school in obtaining

the knowledge and skills necessary for further education, work, and community involvement.” Iowa has 15 community colleges, each of which received an AEFLA grant. In addition to the Director of the Iowa Department of Education, the State Workforce Development Board also has a nonvoting member who is appointed by the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents.

Representatives of Business

Each of the 17 representatives of business meet the requirements in WIOA section 101(b)(1)(C)(i) and the final rules. These members:

- Are the owner or chief executive officer for the business or organization, or is an executive with the business or organization with optimum policy-making or hiring authority, and also may be members of a local workforce development board as described in WIOA sec. 107(b)(2)(A)(i);
- Represent businesses, or organizations that represent businesses that, at a minimum, provide employment and training opportunities that include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and
- Are appointed from a list of potential members nominated by State business organizations and business trade associations.

Multiple members represent small businesses as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Chairperson

The chairperson of the State Board is John Krogman, a representative of business, as required by WIOA section 101(c).

Table 1: Roster of Voting Membership

Name	Affiliation
Kim Reynolds	Governor
Jake Chapman	State Senator
Dave Deyoe	State Representative
Beth Townsend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Title I Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs ○ Wagner-Peyser Employment Service ○ Other State and Federal programs and grants administered by the agency
Ryan Wise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adult Education and Family Literacy Act ○ Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education ○ Other State and Federal programs and grants administered by the agency
Emily Wharton	Vocational Rehabilitation
David Mitchell	Vocational Rehabilitation

Name	Affiliation
John Krogman (Chair)	Business
Jan Miller Straub (Vice Chair)	Business
Joe Greving	Business
Lynn Schreder	Business
Randy Moore	Business
Jay Iverson	Business
Anne Parmley	Business
Ruby Mateos	Business
Amy Larsen	Business
Sondra Meyers	Business
Becky Jacobsen	Business
Steve Gilbert	Business
Phil Tuning	Business
Gina Bettini	Business
Jeff DeVries	Business
Cara Sanders	Business
Kelly Barrick	Business
Carrie Duncan	Labor
Vacant with Rich Kurtenbach's nomination pending	Labor
Ken Sagar	Labor
Andy Roberts	Labor
Richard Moon	Registered Apprenticeship
Jayson Henry	Community-Based Organization
Carmen Heck	Community-Based Organization
Mayor Quentin Hart	Local Chief Elected Official
Supervisor Nancy McDowell	Local Chief Elected Official

Table 2

Roster of Nonvoting Membership

Name

Affiliation

William Dotzler State Senator appointed by the Minority Leader

Kirsten Running-Marquardt State Representative appointed by the Minority Leader

Affiliation

Drew Conrad	Board of Regents, University of Northern Iowa
John Smith	Association of Independent Colleges, Drake University
Wendy Mihm-Herold	Association of Community College Pre , Northeast Iowa Community College
Rita Grimm	Iowa Economic Development Authority, Director's Designee
Rosemary Thierer	Iowa Department on Aging, Director's Designee
Jerry Bartruff	Iowa Department of Corrections, Director
Jerry Foxhoven	Iowa Department of Human Services, Director
Greer Sisson	U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship
Mary Cannon-James	American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 66
Ritchie Kurtenbach	Labor Organization, Construction
Vacant	Labor Organization, Manufacturing

Disability Access Committee

The State Workforce Development Board took action to form a Disability Access Standing Committee. The Disability Access Committee chairperson is David Mitchell, Administrator of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The vice chairperson is Emily Wharton, Director of the Iowa Department for the Blind.

The Disability Access Committee's mission is to address issues relating to providing workforce services to individuals with disabilities, including (but not limited to):

- Issues relating to compliance with applicable state and federal nondiscrimination laws regarding the provision of programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the state workforce development system.
- Appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities

The State Workforce Development Board established a Disability Access Committee to lead a statewide initiative to:

- Ensure that Iowa's one-stop delivery system meets all accessibility requirements for individuals with disabilities under the ICRA, ADA, and WIOA; and
- Increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities to the programs, services, and activities of Iowa's one-stop delivery system.
- Continuously improve for individuals with disabilities the provision of services within the one-stop delivery system.
- Improve opportunities for individuals with disabilities in competitive integrated employment.

Each Local Workforce Development Board has formed a Local Disability Access Committee to work with the State Disability Access Committee as part of the statewide initiative.

The State Disability Access Committee provides direction, guidance, and technical assistance to the Local Disability Access Committees to help meet the goals of the statewide initiative.

Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee

The State Workforce Development Board created the Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee to address disparities in the minority unemployment rate in Iowa. According to the latest Census information, Iowa's statewide unemployment rate was 3.9 percent, while African Americans had an unemployment rate of 14.2 percent, Native Americans had a rate of 11 percent, Asian Americans had a rate of 5.3 percent (other pacific islanders had a rate of 13.6 percent) and Hispanic Americans had a rate of 8.1 percent for the same time period.

Former State Representative Wayne Ford is credited with bringing this issue to the State Workforce Development Board and helping in the development of the group's goals and agenda. The goal of the subcommittee is clear and measurable: to reduce unemployment in minority communities by five percent (or to the state average) in five years.

Four counties have been identified as pilot communities: Polk, Dubuque, Black Hawk and Pottawattamie.

These counties were selected based on having high concentrations of minority residents and unemployment rates. Listening tours have been held, which provided opportunities for members and leaders of the communities to gather a broad perspective and identify connections and influences within communities. A strategic plan specific to issues impacting minority unemployment is being developed that aligns with the Future Ready Iowa initiative and Unified State Plan.

Andy Roberts serves as the chairperson of this Committee.

Reentry Standing Committee

During the listening tour events of the Minority Unemployment and Outreach Committee, one issue came up time and again: Individuals reentering their communities after incarceration. Consequently, the State Workforce Development Board took action to establish a standing committee to focus on offender and ex-offender reentry. The Committee has established the following working groups:

- Reentry process;
- Employer engagement; and
- Ex-offenders in the community.

Lynn Schreder is the chairperson of the Committee.

Youth Standing Committee

The State Workforce Development Board established a Youth Standing Committee to help coordinate services for youth among state agencies and to give direction to Youth Standing Committees on local workforce development boards across the state.

Standing Committee on Industry or Sector Partnerships

As part of the decision by the Governor, IWD, and the Iowa Department of Education to transition the lead role on industry or sector partnership development from the Iowa Department of Education to IWD, the Sector Partnership Leadership Council, which was formerly a standalone entity administered by the Iowa Department of Education, will transition to become a standing committee to the State Workforce Development Board. This change will help streamline the state-level development of industry or sector partnerships, better allow the State Workforce Development Board to perform its required functions under WIOA, better allow local workforce development boards to perform their required functions under WIOA, and better ensure that state standards for sector partnerships comply with WIOA.

This transition will occur after passage of legislation to formalize the transition the role of lead state agency in industry or sector partnership development from the Iowa Department of Education to IWD. This transition will also allow for more engagement with four-year institutions of higher education and training providers for established Registered Apprenticeship programs in addition to current focus on developing sector partnerships that involve community colleges that has seen success across the state. After the transition, the chairperson of the State Workforce Development Board's Standing Committee on Industry or Sector Partnerships will be a member of the State Workforce Development Board in order to ensure compliance with WIOA requirements.

2. Implementation of State Strategy

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Iowa's strategy for workforce development aims to support the State's core mission to meet the needs of Iowa's growing economy and align programs and resources to create an effective and efficient method of workforce development. The State's strategy is focused on supporting a unified workforce system that involves the coordinated services and resources of all core program partners and workforce system partners. Iowa will increase opportunities afforded by the workforce system to individuals and to businesses.

The State of Iowa has convened work groups, made up of members from partner agencies and other key entities, to develop innovative and practical solutions that are reflective of the state's vision and identified priorities.

Workgroup Priorities

- Youth Services
- One-Stop System Design
- Sector Partnerships
- Career Pathways
- Registered Apprenticeships
- Business Services
- Strategies for Serving Underserved Populations
- Policy

The workgroups have been actively reviewing policies, identifying program and system gaps, and have provided recommendations to improve alignment of activities across core programs. The following strategies and activities support the state's workforce goals to create a Future Ready Iowa where ALL Iowans are afforded opportunities to work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

Improving services to youth in Iowa is going to be accomplished through and examination of system weaknesses and strengths, identification of effective programs within the Core Partner agencies, and engaging of partners outside of the plan who are working to serve youth in other capacities such as school guidance counselors, Iowa National Guard and juvenile corrections. The aim is to align workforce services and ensure that each phase of service delivery is fully accessible to ALL Iowa youth. In order to address the variety of barriers and restrictions experienced by youth of all abilities and backgrounds, especially for youth with multiple barriers to employment, creating a fully accessible system in partnership with other agencies serving youth is critical.

An example of a successful program which is now being used as a model in other areas of the state is IVRS' development of the Project Search Third Party Cooperative Arrangement (TPCA). The TPCA positively contributed to increased employment outcomes for eligible VR high school students from the Des Moines School District with the most significant disabilities. The focus was on students whose diagnosis consisted primarily of Intellectual Developmental Disability. The School District committed to using non-federal share dollars for the Project.

According to one of its founders, "The Project Search model yields excellent employment outcomes by providing framework for public and private entities to collaborate and deliver services in a coordinated and productive manner. This collaboration allows for total workplace immersion, which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and relevant job-skills training. Project Search is cost-effective and self-sustainable because it leverages the existing funding streams and expertise of partnering organizations in education, vocational rehabilitation, developmental disabilities services, and other agencies."

Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) offers a Transitional Vocational Rehabilitation Services program to middle, high school & college students (age 14 and older) who are blind or have visual impairments, with goals around employment. Transition program assists to navigate the transition from high school to the world beyond with career counseling and work experience activities.

IDB also offers a Youth Leadership Program for eligible VR clients, in partnership with the Department of Human Rights and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to increase leadership, social, advocacy and life skills development for students in secondary schools through participation in a week long summer experience.

One-Stop System Design is working to develop accessible formats and delivery methods through recognizing and addressing a variety of barriers and restrictions to individuals. Increasing technology and offering flexibility in scheduling will aid in improving services delivery. Increasing supportive services and requiring enhanced professional staff development to increase awareness and utilization of supports will begin in 2016.

IDB offers an array of services through its Orientation Center which prepares Iowans who are blind or have visual impairments in learning the skills of blindness needed for employment, from traveling to technology needed on the job. This program is also open to Iowans, such as employers, who are not visually impaired who wish to develop a better understanding of the challenges faced by the visually impaired.

A major milestone in the work which is being done is the development of a One-Stop System customer-centered design model. This model is being developed and will be rolled out to the local areas in 2017. It includes the creation of an incentive program to encourage center staff to provide enhanced customer service to ALL Iowans. The program currently under development by the core partners includes planning for the creation of the following:

- Collaborative core partner handbook for providing excellent services to job-seekers
- Guidance specific to serving priority populations, such as recipients of public assistance and others identified in WIOA and by the Governor of the State of Iowa
 - Formal guidance on engaging businesses and recruiting community partners
 - Online resource hub for One-Stop Center staff
- Web-based training
- Policy guidance
- Connection to additional resources and staff development opportunities
 - New staff development and training requirements
 - Center certification process
 - Formal recognition of high-achieving centers, staff and clients
 - Improved monitoring procedures developed by the core partners

- Technical assistance to center staff
- Center self-assessment tool
- Enhanced customer satisfaction surveys
- Formal, outside program evaluation process
- Improved processes for providing technical assistance and support to centers

Sector Partnerships

Sector Partnerships in Iowa are focused on incorporation of sector strategies and increasing support for industry-led initiatives into workforce services. This includes looking at ways to increase monetary and administrative support of regionally-based sector strategies throughout Iowa. Iowa Workforce Development was awarded a Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant in 2015 to meet the needs of employers and workers in the aftermath of the Avian Influenza epidemic which affected Iowa's poultry farms and workers through the development and implementation of sector strategies to meet the needs of affected businesses and associated supply chain. Funds from the grant are being used to provide sector partnership facilitator training to Iowa's impacted regions and to respond to the needs of employers and job-seekers.

IVRS area offices are also becoming involved and engaged in sector partnerships. At the state level, IVRS has representation on the statewide Career Pathways and Sector Partnership Advisory Boards and will be involved in policy development that addresses accessibility issues. At the local level, the sector partnerships are locally developed workforce partners that serve specific industry sectors by providing a talent pool of eligible job candidates, as well as technical assistance to business and industry regarding their specific questions and needs. The Burlington Area Office has one IVRS employee on each sector partnership which has proven to be a systemic approach to placement. This allows the team to serve the business, and when a member of the team resigns or retires, a new member from the organization is then placed on the partnership. In this manner business receives services in a continuous fashion, the relationship is built with the partnership, and there is not any gap in service delivery to the business. IVRS area offices are all working with their local workforce development partnerships to become engaged and involved, or in some instances to create these partnerships where they do not exist. IVRS can be instrumental in this development because IVRS is in every county and has personal contacts in each county. This will serve as a conduit to creating and extending sector partnerships to more rural and remote areas of the state.

Sector partnerships are increasingly recognized as an effective method for aligning education, economic, and workforce development systems to address industry-identified labor market needs. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which replaces the Workforce Investment Act, shifts from an "employment first" strategy to one which emphasizes credential attainment through the use of sector partnerships and career pathways.

With support from the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant, \$500,000 was allocated for regional planning and strategy initiatives related to establishing Sector Partnerships. When developing this initiative, one of the most important aspects was to assist Iowa's 15 Regional Workforce Boards (and ultimately the local service providers)

to understand the growing sectors in their Regions as well as the workforce skills that need to be developed to meet local employer demand.

The Iowa Department of Education Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation convened the Sector Partnership and Career Pathway Advisory Council (SPAC) to provide state-level feedback on the implementation of sector partnerships and career. As called for in Iowa's Unified State Plan, the SPAC has been reconfigured into the Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) which will assume the lead role in the implementation and achievement of objectives related to sector partnerships and career pathways across the state, thereby assuming a more formal advisory role to the state Iowa Workforce Development Board. The SPLC membership emphasizes business, industry, and employer representation so that the council is truly industry led and oriented. Membership of the board is posted on the Department's website: (<https://www.educateiowa.gov/adult-career-and-community-college/sector-partnerships/sector-partnership-leadership-council>)

Resources have included facilitator trainings, a series of downloadable toolkit publications, community of practice networking opportunities, and survey findings of Iowa's sector partnerships. Guidance has been leveraged to aid in the expansion and development of sector partnerships through the stages of planning, emerging, and sustaining. Additional information and resources are housed at SectorPartnerships.EducateIowa.gov.

Adult education and literacy providers are encouraged to be involved and at the table in the development of sector partnerships and subsequent career pathway development in their respective regions with a focus on aligning services. Through involvement with the Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration project, a three-year technical assistance grant, Title II has been working to connect the process of sector partnerships to career pathways through the development of integrated education and training activities.

Registered Apprenticeship

The Governor, with support of the Iowa Legislature, increased the state's capacity to meet the rapidly evolving needs of employers through increased support to Registered Apprenticeship programs. In 2014, funding to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs was tripled. IWD recently received a grant to hire a Registered Apprenticeship Statewide Coordinator. IWD is contracting with the Department of Education to identify needs and gaps in the state's Registered Apprenticeship programs and will be applying for the expansion grant to increase the state's immediate and ongoing capacity to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Additionally, IWD will be working to build a model for Pre-Apprenticeships for out of school youth and for adults. IWD will be collaborating with IVRS in this process and looking at current successful IVRS programs which incorporate Registered Apprenticeships.

Career Pathways

Career pathways are a strategy utilized by sector partnerships to address industry-identified labor market needs. Career pathways organize education and training into a coherent, stackable sequence aligned within specific occupations within a given industry. In that way, career pathways support an individual in developing the personal, technical, and employability skills required for advancement within an industry, and transitioning from training and education into the workforce. Colleges, primary and secondary schools, economic development agencies, workforce service providers, employers, labor groups and social service providers all play a vital role in the successful development of career pathways.

The focus of the Future Ready Iowa initiative is the placement of more Iowans into high-demand, well-paying careers in industries such as Information Technology (IT) and Energy & Utilities. General mystique and confusion are often associated with careers in these two fields, which lead to inaccurate stereotypes, the facilitation of incorrect information, and ultimately shortages in local, qualified, and skilled labor. Under the guidance of the SPLC, the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) partnered with the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) to conduct exploratory research and develop career pathway materials for these two exciting career sectors in Iowa.

The Iowa Department of Education received a Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration grant which was a three-year initiative to assist states in advancing career pathways systems specific to transitioning low-skilled adults to postsecondary education and employment. A state advisory board for career pathways and sector boards was formed to guide further discussion and development of unified definitions, an approval process, and performance measures for evaluating effectiveness for career pathways. The project provided targeted technical assistance services to support state's work in developing and implementing a career pathways system. Processes are still being developed to gather existing career pathways in regions and to provide an effective template for future career pathway development which includes appropriate on-ramps for AEL and ELL participants.

The Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) is a program through Walgreens that provides retail skills to externs or trainees with a variety of disabilities. The program works in partnership with agencies within a community to provide job coaches who can help externs gain skills and the opportunity for future employment. Participants in the REDI program are not guaranteed employment, however, the purpose of the training is to provide externs the skills and competencies required to be successful in the retail environment. IVRS works in conjunction with Walgreens stores offering the REDI, in addition to providing funding support to CRP partners who oversee job coaching and training. Externs who successfully complete the 120-hour REDI training have the opportunity to apply for openings at Walgreens or with a neighboring business. Since the initiation of REDI in 2012, IVRS has worked with six Iowa providers (CRPs) to deliver REDI training in twelve Walgreens stores across Iowa. IVRS continues to develop Occupational Skill Training Programs per local area office needs. Communication efforts are being expanded at the local IWD Regional Workforce Boards in order to ensure collaboration with existing career pathways and sector boards will be integrated and accessible for individuals with disabilities.

Integration

IWD is looking to purchase a unified, one-stop, web-based workforce case management and labor exchange system which will be fully accessible and operable by the core partners. This system will function as a shared intake and assessment system and serve as a means by which to collect program data. The use of this system will streamline operations and enhance the customer service experience.

Leaders of eight departments developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to support collaborative service design to increase employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The eight agencies are Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Human Rights/Division for Persons with Disabilities, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of the Aging and Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council. The Partners agree to support all their local offices in adopting the MOA Objective and Strategies to increase employment outcomes for Iowans with disabilities through state and local collaboration, maximizing resources and minimizing duplication in the support for competitive, community integrated employment outcomes. The MOA increases emphasis on aligning workforce system partners through referral and communication, staff training on integrated activities and improved outcomes.

Integrated Education and Training

Iowa's Title II providers are being highly encouraged to develop programs that support the components of Integrated Education and Training (IET). State and federal adult education funds are being used to support IET activities, which concurrently and contextually blend basic skills with workplace skills and with work based learning or workforce training activities

Funds incentivizing the development and enrollment of IET participants have been awarded to eleven providers. Additionally, technical assistance funds are being used to engage all providers in the planning and incorporation of the required components of IET activities into a seamless program offering. The technical assistance offered by Title II at the department highlights the participants engaged in IET activities and exposes them to an educational approach that is aligned with career pathways and uses a structured approach under a single set of learning objectives. The participants are able to directly benefit by receiving concurrent instruction. In some IET models being developed by local providers, participants are receiving their high school equivalency in addition to an industry recognized credential within the same period of participation.

In addition to the modification to the design of the curriculum and class enrollment, an IET encourages the partnering of educational providers or workforce partners in delivering the workplace skills instruction or the training element. These partnerships allow the flexibility in offering a range of workforce training allowable under WIOA such as postsecondary credentials, on the job training, apprenticeship or customized employer training. Some of the workforce training is customizable to the needs of the employer as well as to the participant to encourage skill development in high demand areas of regional employment.

IDB operates a Career Resource Center for Iowans with visual impairments which provides accessible technology, equipment and software to be used to prepare, gain and maintain skills and credentials needed for employment.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education has an agreement that outlines shared responsibilities between IVRS and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to prepare youth with disabilities for successful competitive, integrated community employment. Through this agreement IVRS has ready access to the student's IEPs that are on the IVRS caseload, which allows for a more timely development of the IVRS eligibility justification (within 60 days) and the individual plan for employment (within 90 days). This Memorandum of Agreement expands beyond the previous agreement and provides greater direction and support to the local IEP teams. This agreement describes roles and responsibilities and also financial obligations.

B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan

The core partners have been working collaboratively with required and optional partners to develop policies, procedures, and best practices to facilitate the organization and integration of workforce services under WIOA. Policies are prioritized by function rather than by program, when permitted by a program's authorizing statute and as appropriate to best serve the needs of ALL Iowans, including employers. The shared objective is to create a system which is a truly integrated, seamless, and capable of interactive communication, case management, and incorporation of the appropriate use of technology for maximum effectiveness. This requires coordinating staff communication, inclusion of a diverse group of stakeholders, and a means by which to keep the direction and progression of the remaining work focused.

Functional Alignment - Examines areas of natural alignment or similar program tasks of One-Stop Center staff to identify areas where workloads can be shared or supplemented through the use of functional teams, such as those dedicated to skills development and business services.

Service Integration - Places the priority on serving the diverse needs customer as opposed to meeting generically prescribed goals which may or may not benefit the customer's unique needs, talents, abilities and interests. Service integration also provides a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the aligned purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.

Iowa Department of Human Services

The Iowa Department of Human Services makes a positive difference in the lives of Iowans we serve through effective and efficient leadership, excellence, and teamwork through a variety of workforce related programs and supports such as the Employment Assistance Program which provides home and community based services, supported employment to youth, 15 and older, or Adults with Disabilities (ID and BI) or Brain Injury. Basic work skills and supports through career exploration, developing work skills and work supports are among program offerings.

Future Ready Iowa

Future Ready Iowa aims to achieve systemic changes to increase the number of citizens with a postsecondary credential with the intended result of increasing the number of skilled workers available to employers. Igniting economic development with a skilled workforce and the best educated student population in the nation will achieve Governor Branstad's goals, which will increase the income levels of Iowa families.

For the workforce development system this means creating a system that utilizes resources efficiently and aligns government programs in a manner that responds to and supports the needs of private business. Future Ready Iowa was developed by the National Governors Association Policy Academy Developing Iowa's Future Talent Pipeline and list the general membership of the Policy Academy.

To achieve the prosperity supported by world-class talent educated with Iowa's values and work ethic, Iowa's government is responding with the workforce development system of the future. Iowa's workforce development systems will build the system of tomorrow to attain the results needed today through skill building focused on the job-driven expectations of business and industry - occupational and soft skills.

Through implementation of career pathways and infusing of robust sector strategies across systems, Iowa is committed to serving the underserved citizenry by closing educational and employment gaps to end disparities based on disability, ethnicity, race, class, and geographic location.

The goal of Future Ready Iowa is:

By 2025, 70% of all Iowans will have earned a postsecondary degree or industry-recognized credential or certification - the new minimum - that meets employer needs.

The goal will be accomplished through the following objectives:

- Identify and meet employer needs by focusing on sector strategies, career pathways and better aligning state and federal programs and initiatives, including public-private partnerships, to support high-skill, high-demand jobs.
- Communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders through career planning, including an interactive portal of career opportunities and required credentials and experience.
- Improve college and career readiness, increase interest and achievement in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) study and careers.
- Minimize education-related debt.

The following strategies will aid in reaching Future Ready objectives:

1. Identify and quantify employers' education, training, and employment needs and capture those needs in a Talent Supply & Demand interactive portal to be driven by a public-private collaborative, leveraging and institutionalizing the sector strategies and career pathways methodologies.
2. Improve degree and credential completion and target resources to support attainment of high-demand credentials, degrees, and certifications valued by employers, including for those individuals with barriers to employment.
3. Cultivate, develop and align work-based learning opportunities including, but not limited to, STEM school-business partnerships, student internships, teacher externships and apprenticeships for individuals through public-private partnerships.
4. Create a system of coordinated resources to engage, assist, and reinforce Future Ready career guidance for parents, students, educators and adults.
5. Ensure secondary students have access to high quality career and technical educational programs aligned with labor market needs.
6. Ensure all Iowa students meet high state academic standards, including being literate by the end of the third grade and achieving in STEM disciplines.
7. Increase rigorous concurrent enrollment opportunities in high demand career pathways, including STEM disciplines.
8. Institutionalize the college-going process within secondary schools statewide (College Application Campaign, FAFSA Completion, assessing "college fit," etc.).
9. Elevate and operationalize promising financial literacy models that impact student borrowing.
10. Nurture entrepreneurial connectivity and skills development.

Iowa Department on Aging

The Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) is the designated State Unit on Aging and was established as a result of The Older Americans Act (OAA), enacted by Congress in 1965. The OAA promotes the well-being of older adults and assists them in remaining independent and in their own homes and communities. The U.S. Administration for Community Living distributes federal OAA funds to State Units on Aging which, in turn, designate Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) at the local level to provide information and services to older Iowans. Title III of the OAA provides funds to help states organize and pay for meals and a broad range of home and community based services through the AAAs and hundreds of service providers throughout the state; this structure is commonly called the "aging network." All persons who are 60 and older are eligible to receive services, but states are required to target assistance to persons with the "greatest social or economic need."

The Iowa Department on Aging is currently charged with an aggressive restructuring of the aging network. On March 29, 2012, Governor Terry Branstad signed House File 2320 mandating a reduction in the number of Area Agencies on Aging. Frequently referred to as the "modernization of the aging network," this initiative effectively reduced the

number of AAAs from 13 to six in an effort to create a more efficient network. The primary goal of the Department on Aging is to have Iowa be viewed as the premier state in which to live and retire.

IDA advocate for changes in public policy, practices and programs that empower Iowans; facilitate their access to services; protect their rights; and prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation. Activities may include legislative advocacy, information dissemination, outreach and referral, research and analysis and coalition building. The 2010 U.S. Census found that 20 percent of Iowa's population is currently 60 years of age or older. By 2030, 20 percent of the population in 88 of Iowa's 99 counties will be aged 65 or older.

IDA administers the ABE Senior Community Service Employment Program serving Individuals age 55 and older, at or below 125% of poverty, and unemployed and employers. The program fosters economic self-sufficiency and promotes useful part-time opportunities in community service organizations to increase the numbers of older persons who can obtain employment. The program also assists participants in receiving work skills training and provides work services for non-profit and governmental organizations.

Governor's STEM Council

Created with the goal of increasing STEM interest and achievement, the STEM Council is a collaboration of bipartisan Iowa legislators, educators, business, nonprofits, students and families focused on improving STEM opportunities and awareness in Iowa. The STEM Council follows this definition of STEM:

"...an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply science, technology, engineering and mathematics in contexts that make connections between school, community, work and the global enterprise enabling the development of STEM literacy and with it the ability to compete in the new economy."

The Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is a made up of leaders in higher education, business, pre-K through 12 educators, as well as state and local government officials. The STEM Council is led by Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds and Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson. The executive director of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is Dr. Jeff Weld. There are 47 members on the STEM Council, including 17 members that comprise the Executive Committee.

Current STEM Initiatives target secondary and community college students and their teachers through the Microsoft IT Academy, which provides training on Office software and systems network analyst training and certifications to 150 Iowa secondary schools and community colleges.

Iowa STEM BEST Business Engaging Students and Teachers targets secondary school lead applicants with business commitments & secondary STEM learners through an incentive program to drive school/business partnerships for content delivery/aligned instruction. Five current sites involving 14 districts and businesses exist as part of this initiative.

The STEM Teacher Externships targets secondary teachers of STEM subjects, and industry partners in STEM areas. Secondary teachers of math, science, technology, and engineering are matched with full time work during summer to take on authentic tasks and roles in STEM industries.

Iowa Office of Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship USA

The National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 authorizes the federal government, in cooperation with the states, to oversee the nation's apprenticeship system. In Iowa, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) is responsible for registering apprenticeship programs that meet federal guidelines. It issues certificates of completion to apprentices and encourages the development of new programs.

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven system for training employees in a variety of occupations that require a wide range of skills and knowledge. It is an ideal way for employers to build and maintain a skilled workforce. Registered Apprenticeship combines supervised on-the-job learning with technical related instruction in subjects related to the apprentice's chosen occupation. Apprenticeship, by virtue of its success in preparing skilled workers, helps America compete more effectively in the global economy, and contributes to America's economic development and sustained economic growth.

The Registered Apprenticeship system provides opportunity for workers seeking high-skilled, high- paying jobs and for employers seeking to build a qualified workforce. In this regard, the Registered Apprenticeship system effectively meets the needs of both employers and workers. Registered Apprenticeship is highly active in traditional industries such as construction and advanced manufacturing. It is also instrumental in the training and development of high demand industries such as healthcare, energy and information technology.

Apprenticeship programs are operated by both the public and private sectors, with programs registered with OA called sponsors. A sponsor may be employers, employer associations and labor-management organizations. Recently, community colleges and workforce development centers have collaborated with business and industry to develop Registered Apprenticeship programs through sponsoring employer-participation agreements. Regions that adopt robust Registered Apprenticeship programs in the context of economic development strategies create seamless pipelines of skilled workers and flexible career pathways to meet current and future workforce demands.

The State of Iowa tripled funding for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in 2014 to \$3 million and has been recognized by The UAS DOL in regard to innovative practices and number of new Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

ApprenticeshipUSA targets Employers, Veterans, Youth, Unemployed, Underemployed, and Career Seekers through provision of a variety of services. Employers have access to tools to develop a highly skilled workforce to help grow their business. For workers, RA offers opportunities to earn a salary while gaining the skills necessary to succeed in high-demand careers. ApprenticeshipUSA exemplifies high standards, instructional rigor and quality training. Immediate Employment, Job Training, Skills, and Nationally recognized Certifications and Credentials for job seekers.

Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses to attract and grow business, employment and workforce in Iowa. Ground-breaking economic growth strategies focusing on cultivating start-up companies and helping existing companies become more innovative complement the activities underway to retain and attract companies that are creating jobs for Iowans.

Developing sustainable, adaptable communities ready for this growth is also an essential part of our work at IEDA — providing programs and resources that help communities reinvest, recover and revitalize to make each community's vision a reality. Much of what you know about Iowa is true. It's what you don't know that sets us apart. The Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress seeks to build Iowa's economic health and strengthen supports to employers as well as current and future employees through dedicated collaborations among key agencies and streamlined processes.

Iowa Economic Development Authority Programs

Federal Career Link Program - A Community Development Block Grant targets low to moderate income individuals through industry-driven training programs that invest in projects that assist the underemployed and working poor to obtain the training and skills they need to move into available higher-skill, higher wage jobs.

The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E) targets employers creating new jobs in Iowa by providing financing for training for new jobs created through a business expanding or locating in Iowa through the sale of bond certificates by Iowa community colleges.

The Accelerated Career Education Program (ACE tax credits) (260G) targets any business except retail and assists community colleges to establish or expand training programs for occupations needed by Iowa business.

The Targeted Industries Internship Program (TIIP) targets Iowa companies with under 500 employees in the Advanced Manufacturing, Bioscience, and IT industries. It provides grants to small and medium-sized companies under 500 employees in the advanced manufacturing, biosciences and information technology industries to help support their internship programs with a goal of transitioning interns to full-time employment in the state upon graduation.

The Iowa Jobs Training Program targets current workforces of existing Iowa employers through financing training for existing of incumbent workforces of Iowa businesses.

The STEM Internship targets Iowa employers employing STEM major interns. This program provides grants to employers to support Iowa students studying in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through internships that lead to self-sustaining jobs with Iowa employers.

Iowa Finance Authority

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) offers a variety of programs and services to individuals, communities and businesses and has touched the lives of countless Iowans through a wide variety of affordable financing programs throughout its 40-year history such as the Agricultural Development Division which provides loan and tax credit programs to assist beginning Iowa farmers. Iowa Title Guaranty is also administered at IFA and offers guaranteed title to real property in Iowa.

Economic Development Bond Program - The Iowa Finance Authority issues tax-exempt bonds to businesses and organizations for a wide range of projects. These have included expanding and improving health care services, industrial development and housing. As of 2012, the Iowa Finance Authority has issued more than \$7.5 billion in bonds to assist businesses build or expand in Iowa.

The Economic Development Bond Program issues tax-exempt bonds on behalf of private entities or organizations for eligible purposes. In 2014, the State of Iowa received \$309 million of volume cap for allocation to eligible projects in the following categories: single-family, job training, student loans, beginning farmers, industrial and political subdivision.

Iowa Department of Corrections

The Iowa Department of Corrections Professional Development Training Program mission is to prepare and update institution and community correctional employees' knowledge base, skills, and competencies; to enable them to perform their duties within the parameters of sound and effective correctional practices in order to protect the general public, themselves, and their co-workers, while managing offenders in an environment that supports offender change.

Iowa Workforce Development, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Corrections, has implemented the Ex-Offender Initiative which focuses on connecting ex and soon-to-be-released inmates with career opportunities and supports. The workforce advisors assigned to this initiative network with employers to address the barriers they may have in hiring ex-offenders. Each of the participants in the program completes the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC).

Thousands of inmates are released from Iowa prisons each year. Many of them are eager to get a job and lead a productive life. Without a job it is nearly impossible for these individuals to establish a new life and become productive citizens. Hiring an ex-offender can help them integrate into society so they can become a taxpayer instead of a tax burden.

Many employers experiencing labor shortages consider their number one challenge is to identify, attract and retain employees. To address these needs, employers are increasing their applicant pool by looking at individuals with criminal histories. Employed ex-offenders are some of the most dedicated and productive employees. They are overwhelmingly dependable and punctual and the turnover rate is atypically low.

Iowa DOC supports Private Industry Partnerships In Iowa, which create opportunities for private companies to hire offenders while they are still incarcerated under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections (DOC).

Since the Private Industry Enhancement (PIE) program began in 1992, private companies and the DOC have worked in partnership at locations throughout the state. Offenders have worked millions of hours in fields such as manufacturing, printing, and call center operations, at facilities located on and off prison grounds.

The first private sector partner was established nearly twenty years ago and is still going strong. For employers, the PIE program offers a productive, reliable, and motivated workforce. Offenders are paid market based wages, and by law are allowed to retain 20% of their earnings. The balance is used to pay taxes, child and family support, victim restitution, and room and board. As a result, inmates are able to build some savings before they are released, while at the same time giving back to society.

Although inmates are paid market based wages, the benefits paid by employers are significantly reduced:

- Employers pay no medical or dental benefits;
- Employers pay no sick time, vacation or holiday pay;
- Employers pay no unemployment insurance;
- Employers pay no workers' compensation;

In addition, training assistance and training wage programs may be available, making the PIE program a very cost effective solution for many private employers. Inmate employees are carefully screened by the Department of Corrections, and are then interviewed and selected by the employer. As the employer, you retain the right to hire, promote or dismiss offenders, ensuring that you can operate your business successfully. The PIE program for private sector operations is administered by Iowa Prison Industries. IPI can help you determine if the PIE program is right for your company, and will work with you at every step along the way to get started.

The Corrections Education Program (ABE) targets offenders over the age of 18 who do not have a High School Diploma. It is designed to meet the basic literacy needs of adults and improve and/or upgrade current education and skill levels of adults.

Achieving an integrated partnership that seamlessly incorporates services of the programs and activities outside the plan is essential to the success of effective policy planning and development. Central to the idea of achieving an integrated partnership which places the customer first, is a mission towards an integrated case management system that will help streamline workforce development service delivery across the state. The integrated case management system will help streamline service delivery and avoid redundancies. This will help to maximize resources so that they can be directed toward providing high-quality services to job seekers, employees, and employers that are responsive to real-time and future labor market needs.

C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to

individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Services to Individuals

In December, 2015, the partners convened a team to review the Value Stream Mapping work previously completed during an intensive three-day event. The focus of this event was to advance the original themes, ideas and strategies that were developed during previous events through the creation of specific activities and assignment of partners to coordinate the activities. The recommended strategies to achieve the State's workforce development goals for ALL Iowans including employers and job-seekers, is discussed in this and following sections.

The infusion of accessibility and advancement towards improved alignment among the partners informed the process throughout. Enhanced delivery of workforce services through the incorporation of innovative ideas and actions will be achieved by furthering this work with robust policies and fiscal and legislative support in Iowa. In reviewing the following table, it is important to note that each of Iowa's goals has an industry, workforce, or system-focus. As evidenced throughout the table, all three foci were considered heavily in development of strategies and activities to accomplish the goals. As previously stated, Iowa's workforce goals are as follows:

GOAL I: Industry-focused

Iowa's employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and Future Ready workers.

GOAL II: Workforce-focused

All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation.

GOAL III: System-focused

Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

Implementation of the State's Strategy

Accessibility

In order to achieve accessibility, there remains much work to be done with Iowa's employers to identify and reduce barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. This includes expanding accessible opportunities for traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, and individuals with barriers to employment to enter into sustainable employment.

Coordinated action steps addressing accessibility include the following:

1. Identification of barriers to employment for ALL Iowans, with special emphasis on, but not limited to, the following:

- Individuals with Disabilities,
- Displaced homemakers,
- Low-income individuals,
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians,
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities,
- Older individuals,
- Ex-offenders/Re-entering Citizens,
- Homeless individuals including homeless youth and children, and victims of domestic violence,
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system,
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers,
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers,
- Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.),
- Single parents (including single pregnant women) and
- Long-term unemployed individuals.

2. Provision of guidance and support to Iowa's employers to address barriers to employment for ALL Iowans, and

3. Reduction in barriers to employment for ALL Iowans.

In order to create a fully accessible system which emphasizes service to individuals, IWD is transitioning to a web-based customer service model. This model will include a customized intake form currently under development by the core partners which will be fully accessible and available in multiple languages.

By bridging services across agencies and programs and placing a greater emphasis on improved and expanded staff training which includes intra-agency cross-training, services to individuals will be further enhanced. A process and procedure for a greater focus on monitoring for program effectiveness within the One-Stop Centers is being developed by the core partners and will be rolled out to local areas in 2017. The plan calls for enhanced customer feedback systems and engagement of stakeholders in the monitoring and feedback process. Provision of technical assistance and feedback on the state-level to local areas will assist in the evaluation of programs and services to individuals, and businesses, and will improve program overall effectiveness. Non-punitive corrective action plans with the goal of providing guidance as well as a formal recognition program for high-achieving centers, staff, and job-seekers will be fundamental to the success of this program.

The needs of businesses are going to fuel the creation of a service delivery model which balances the needs of employers with the employment needs of job-seekers. Minimizing the participatory burden of businesses and individuals will in itself create improved access and encourage job-seekers to pursue additional services. A reporting system which is created, supported and implemented among core partners and relevant agencies will reduce the participatory burden to staff as well.

A referral process that allows for direct connection by and between key agency staff, which includes holding agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success is underway and set to be rolled out in conjunction with the Iowa One-Stop Center standards in 2017. The braiding and blending of funding streams will maximize benefits and services to Iowa's job seekers, employees and employers.

In addition to having all adult education and literacy sites assessed for physical accessibility, providers work diligently in assuring programmatic access to services. Training and awareness in ways that access can be limited to participants has been a recurring theme for adult education and literacy staff. Participants have access to appropriate accommodations from intake and through career and training services provided by Title II. Title II will work with appropriate support services as needed by the participants.

Sector Partnerships

The implementation of sector partnerships will engage employers in the continuous and dynamic development of programs and initiatives which are responsive to Iowa's existing and future labor-market needs. Coordinated action steps resulting from the incorporation of sector strategies and support of industry-led initiatives into workforce services will include the following:

1. Work with industry to increase opportunities for all Iowans to gain the experience, skills, and credentials needed to obtain and main self-sustaining employment.
2. Close skill gaps between Iowa's workforce and employers by expanding and supporting sector strategies for in-demand industries.
3. Identify and quantify employers' education, training, and workforce needs and capture those needs in a comprehensive system (planned to be Career Coach) to be driven by a public-private collaborative and accessible system.

The Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant/National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) provides support for the development and coordination of sector partnerships in regions impacted by the Avian Flu epidemic by targeting three in-demand sectors. The three primary sectors which are targeted include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare & transportation and logistics. This funding is being used, in part, to support the advancement and work of a state sector council - *Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC)*, which provides leadership in the development and support of sector partnerships and career pathways. The purpose of the SPLC is to engage Iowa's employment leaders in the development and delivery of workforce services across Iowa and in the continuous and dynamic development of programs and initiatives which are responsive to Iowa's existing and future labor-market needs. The NDWG is also funding, in part, the procurement of a CAEL contract which will provide facilitator training throughout the state to facilitate the advancement of sector strategies across Iowa.

Within each industry sector, different representation by members can bring additional perspective, varying needs and resources in building the talent pipeline. By having adult education and literacy providers involved at a regional and state level in the development of sector partnerships, the needs of the businesses are being heard. This information is

used to ensure that workplace skills (21st Century Skills) are business centric and relevant to today's demands and employer expectations. By partnering with businesses in the discussion of regional needs, Title II providers are able to identify gaps in services and areas of duplication. If the gaps can appropriately be addressed through curriculum development by adult education and literacy and then concurrently delivered with basic skills instruction, the time commitment for the participant in pursuing their educational needs is reduced. In addressing areas of duplication, resources can be shared or waiting lists eliminated thus providing to the participant the best resources to meet local employer demand.

In addition to business and industry, regional support providers, workforce development agencies and other educational providers attend the regional sector partnership meetings. These sources of wrap-around support allows local adult education and literacy providers to partner and align supportive services to the participant. These support providers often form the nucleus in assisting participants with multiple barriers to employment and achieve success in gaining the educational requirements to qualify for becoming a job candidate. By linking with supportive service providers, adult education and literacy is able to increase enrollment opportunities for participants and to increase the reach of assistance in reducing socio-economic barriers.

An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. \$3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

IWD recently received a grant to hire a Registered Apprenticeship Statewide Coordinator. IWD is contracting with the Department of Education to identify needs and gaps in the state's Registered Apprenticeship programs and will be applying for the expansion grant to increase the state's immediate and ongoing capacity to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs. IWD will be working to build a model for Pre-Apprenticeships for out of school youth and for adults. IWD will be collaborating with IVRS in this process and looking at current successful IVRS programs which incorporate Registered Apprenticeships.

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing is a statewide, integrated marketing campaign to promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing. This begins with building a positive perception of these careers while addressing misconceptions of work environment, safety, and wages. Elevate offers resources to the public specifically targeting those eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for workers, unemployed/underemployed Iowans, U.S. veterans, educators, along with K-12 students and their families. Elevate is a National Partner of The Manufacturing Institute's *Dream It. Do It.* This initiative works to change the perception of the industry and inspire the next-generation workers to pursue manufacturing careers.

Enhance Iowa is another program which will assist in the support and coordination of services to individuals in Iowa. Enhance Iowa originated with a \$15 million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant was part of a larger federal initiative called Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training or TAACCCT. Started

in 2009, the TAACCT program has issued a series of grants to community colleges across the nation for the purpose of putting people back to work. Hawkeye Community College was chosen to lead a consortium consisting of all 15 of Iowa's community colleges. This consortium, now known as Enhance Iowa, will use the \$15 million grant to train Iowans in skill sets needed by local employers.

The TAACCT grant awarded to Enhance Iowa is the fourth and last of four TAACCCT initiatives. Each wave of grants focused on a specific industry or needed skill set by employers. Enhance Iowa's grant focuses on the areas of IT, healthcare, utilities and manufacturing. In total, 71 entities were given \$450 million in the final TACCCT award.

The first wave of funds was allocated on October 1, 2014, and they will continue to be dispersed over a four-year period. All of Iowa's community colleges will receive a portion of the money, allowing them to purchase new learning equipment and offer more programs. 45 new programs will be offered across the Enhance Iowa consortium as a result.

Career Pathways

Coordinated efforts will engage ALL Iowans in the career pathway process using innovative approaches in the delivery of career services. Key to these efforts will be the offering of a variety of career path navigation supports to enhance transition into the workforce for ALL Iowans. Coordinated action steps within Iowa's career pathways work will include the following:

1. Provide workers with skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed for ALL Iowans to secure self-sustaining employment.
2. Provide ongoing supports so ALL Iowans can maintain self-sustaining employment and work to their fullest potential.

Specifically, Youth Services will make connections to statewide support systems, increase and enhance youth engagement, and build the capacity of educators for encouraging movement through a variety of pathway options.

Participants in adult education and literacy services will benefit from the coordinated efforts that have resulted in the development of career pathways, as the education and employment prospects of a given career cluster have been identified. These pathways will allow an individual to make informed decisions on their educational pursuits and as they gain credentialing and skills to clearly see their next step or employment opportunities afforded them if they choose to step off the path.

The pathways will allow the alignment and stacking of appropriate skills, vocabulary and networking in high-demand jobs as detailed by the regional sector partnerships. This information will be used at intake for Title II participants, during counseling or advising sessions and during key milestones on their educational journey, to ensure participants are prepared and transitioning as seamlessly as possible to their next step.

IVRS plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Education for the purposes of expanding the Intermediary Network with the focus of serving students

with disabilities to connect with career pathways. IVRs will fund up to \$1.5 million to support the Intermediary Network, which is delivered by the community college system. This expansion, focused on students with disabilities who have traditionally not been able to access career pathways, will develop the mechanism by which students with disabilities gain skills in occupations that are job-driven. This will be accomplished through improved work based learning strategies.

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing will promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing through creating a positive perception of these careers while addressing misconceptions of work environment, safety, wages and nontraditional population integration into these careers. Enhance Iowa will assist in the support and coordination of services to individuals in Iowa through Iowa's 15 community colleges to provide relevant training to Iowans in skill sets needed by local employers.

Career Coach is a Future Ready Iowa initiative in collaboration with IWD, IDOE, and the community colleges. Career Coach provides career pathways by region, access to the ETPL, and many other features to assist job-seekers in online career exploration. It provides users with local occupational level wages, industry trends, employment projections (growth/decline), occupational tasks, skills, education/training needed by occupation, where to find types of education/training, demographic data, and current job postings for employers in Iowa. The tool also includes a career assessment tool (short and long versions), military occupation crosswalk, career cluster, and resume builder.

Career Coach brings together federal, state and private sources under one simple-to-use on-line tool for anyone looking to explore career options by providing them the information to make career decisions. The data sources include the US Department of Commerce, US Department of Labor, US Department of Education, US Census Bureau, Employment & Training Administration and Careerbuilder.

Career Coach will be used, in conjunction with other methods, to communicate high-demand career pathways to students, parents, teachers, counselors, workers and community leaders. In addition, students and job-seekers will be able to navigate the career planning process and be connected to a dashboard of career opportunities with information on required credentials, experience and eligible training providers, by region.

Integration

System-wide integration will rely on improvements to the quality of workforce development services through the provision of consistent, integrated, and non-duplicative services across education, rehabilitation, economic and workforce activities. As the key to collaborative efforts across the various systems within Iowa, the coordinated actions steps for integration of services are extensive and include the following:

Development of an interagency definition of "self-sustaining employment". IWD is exploring ways to address this issue and is looking into the Wisconsin online assessment tool to determine self-sufficiency in employment.

Implementation of an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision-making.

The Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) was established to assist with the implementation of key WIOA provisions which emphasize in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways resulting in attainment of industry-recognized, stackable credentials. The SPLC will review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa's workforce that support employers and job-seekers.

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as, the general public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities a blind or visually impaired person can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state, including businesses seeking to provide employment opportunities for individuals who are visually impaired.

IDB provides employment services to blind and visually impaired Iowans who are looking for a job or want to maintain or advance their current career. Iowa is consistently ranked as one of the nation's highest in the percentage of blind and visually impaired people successfully placed, employed and remaining in jobs.

Integrated Education & Training

Preparing a Future Ready workforce that readies ALL Iowans to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's workforce requires integrated education and training. This includes providing accessible and increased education and training opportunities for ALL Iowans that support the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the job market. ALL Iowans will also have access to entrepreneurial skill development and to learn business strategies and concepts through connections with Iowa's business leaders. Coordinated action steps to integrate education and training opportunities will include the following:

1. Align with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce recommendations.
- Align with the Future Ready Initiative recommendations.
3. Align with the NGA Work-Based Learning recommendations (forthcoming).
4. Convene a youth-focused work group.
5. Provide individuals and small businesses with guidance, to include business enterprises, asset development, and benefits planning, in the start-up, operation, and effective management of entrepreneurial pursuits.

Iowa's Title II providers are being highly encouraged to develop programs that support the components of Integrated Education and Training (IET). State and federal adult education funds are being used to support IET activities, which concurrently and contextually blend basic skills with workplace skills and with work based learning or workforce training activities. Participants engaged in IET activities are exposed to an educational approach that is aligned with career pathways and uses a structured approach

under a single set of learning objectives. The participants are able to directly benefit by receiving concurrent instruction and in some models being developed by local providers are receiving their high school equivalency in addition to an industry recognized credential within the same period of participation.

In addition to the modification to the design of the curriculum and class enrollment, an IET encourages the partnering of educational providers or workforce partners in delivering the workplace skills instruction or the training element. These partnerships allow the flexibility in offering a range of workforce training allowable under WIOA such as postsecondary credentials, on the job training, apprenticeship or customized employer training. Some of the workforce training is customizable to the needs of the employer as well as to the participant to encourage skill development in high demand areas of regional employment.

Participants co-enrolled in Title II and another core program are highly encouraged to enroll in IET activities. Title II would work to ensure that all workforce training activities are being offered by eligible training providers if programs are blending their funds to support the participant.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Education for the purposes of expanding the Intermediary Network with the focus of serving students with disabilities to connect with career pathways. IVRS will fund up to \$1.5 million to support the Intermediary Network, which is delivered by the community college system. This expansion, focused on students with disabilities who have traditionally not been able to access career pathways, will develop the mechanism by which students with disabilities gain skills in occupations that are job-driven. This will be accomplished through improved work based learning strategies.

The Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program Act (15B) was enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 2014. The purpose of 15B to increase the number of registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants to eligible apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeships are a proven approach to preparing workers for in-demand jobs and meeting the needs of business for a highly skilled workforce that can innovate and adapt. The program is administered by IEDA in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Only apprenticeship programs registered and meeting USDOL standards, known as a sponsor, are eligible for an IEDA training grant.

An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. \$3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The Iowa Department of Corrections has been an excellent partner with Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. One of the Departments' major objectives is to provide educational and career and technical training to these incarcerated youth and adults. The IDOE will continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Corrections (DOC) in aligning their curriculum and student performance standards, data accountability system, and teacher training with the state-administered Adult Education and Family Literacy Program.

Iowa's adult education and literacy program employs innovative approaches to increase the education levels and self-sufficiency of inmates, while reducing the recidivism rate in Iowa. Corrections programs enrolled 653 participants in Iowa's information management system in PY 2014. Data sharing agreements have been reached and training provided to include all eligible adult education participants in reporting. This information will be used by both the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections to improve services offered in correctional education programs, to streamline services and to maximize benefits.

Iowa's approach to corrections education enrolls participants through state correctional institutions and through local correctional facilities. Effective through an MOU and the use of shared state leadership funds, all correctional programs are held accountable to the required common benchmarks (additional tracking of release dates for tracking follow-up will be implemented) through the Iowa's Assessment Policy. Funds awarded from the AEFLA program funds may be used to support the correctional programs in providing allowable academic programs within the twenty percent expenditure cap. State funds administered through the DOC are awarded to five community colleges to provide adult education programs for adult students in nine state institutions. The DOC contract, in partnership with the community colleges and Iowa Department of Education adult education and literacy team, establishes the level of staff, curriculum and program standards to be offered in each of the nine state facilities. These funds support and extend the academic programs to assist participants in acquiring the basic skills and competencies necessary to move from an institutional setting into the workforce and community.

Another initiative underway is the creation of a data collection effort aligned across core agencies. It includes the development of an integrated system among the core programs. Members of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation IRSS Project Management Team and Information Technology Department have met with representatives in similar positions in other core programs to begin discussions on a common data collection and common application system. Preliminary discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as current development structures that can be used to move toward a common system. It was determined that the current Iowa Workforce Development system already contains the structure and code to work across systems and can be built upon to provide a common data and application system. The team is hopeful that a common system can be in place to meet annual reporting requirements for FFY17, and if that cannot be accomplished, the team will develop strategies to share data for individual reporting until the common system is deployed. Some of the core programs have their own development teams while others work with outside vendors so that will add some complexity to determining a target completion date for development of the

system. As part of this work, Iowa Workforce Development, in collaboration with other WIOA core programs including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Adult Education and Family Literacy, is developing a public dashboard containing information on sector strategies and career pathways.

The dashboard will provide stakeholders with the following information:

- Identification and information on high-demand jobs;
- Pathways to high-demand jobs;
- Information on training including internships and apprenticeships;
- College and career planning information;
- Information related to sector partnerships and career pathways integrating labor market information and
- Information on how to finance a chosen pathway.

The one-stop delivery system will address barriers faced in accessing and maintaining usage of the services provided by core partners through an advanced training and staff development program. Barriers to obtaining and maintaining services from core partners include, but are not limited to transportation, awareness and understanding of services, language barriers, and familiarity with culture and civic education.

D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

One-Stop centers will develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy. One-Stop systems provide workforce services that meet the labor-market needs of employers. Partners will collaborate to achieve an integrated approach to business services delivery in the State and Local One-Stop systems. This will include the implementation of business-focused outreach and initiatives.

Onsite workplace education allows workers to apply basic academic concepts to everyday job tasks, resulting in a better trained, more productive workforce. Local programs have been working with employers to identify skills employees need to be successful in their jobs and design a course of basic skills instruction around these needs. Instructors integrate examples and tools from the work environment to make learning relevant to the participant.

The Partners will develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices to help Local Staff:

- Facilitate engagement of employers, including smaller employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce services programs.
- Offer and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.
- Identify and develop a clear understanding of industry skill needs, identifying appropriate strategies for assisting employers, and coordinating business services activities across programs, as appropriate, in order to support area employers and industry sectors most effectively.
- Incorporate an integrated and aligned business services strategy among Partners to present a unified voice for the One-Stop Center in its communications with employers.
- Use the forthcoming performance measure(s) on effectiveness in serving employers to support continuous improvement of these services.
- Engage employers in sector partnerships that are responsive to labor-market needs.
- Incorporate employer input when developing innovative training opportunities that are responsive to labor-market needs.
- Develop a Business Services Team in each Local Region. The Business Services Team must consist of at least one Local Staff member from each Core Partner, and may also include Local Staff from other Partners.

In addition, the partners will develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices regarding the development of programs and activities that may include but are not limited to implementation of initiatives such as:

- Incumbent worker training programs
- On-the-job training programs
- Customized training programs
- Apprenticeship programs
- Industry and sector strategies
- Career pathways
- Section partnerships
- Utilization of effective business intermediaries
- Public-private partnerships
- Other business services, strategies, and training opportunities, designed to meet the needs of employers.

Existing Services to Employers

Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and IWD work closely with the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship, the community college system and others to identify employers' workforce needs and to develop solutions to address them. The Technology Association of Iowa (TAI) works closely with the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) and Information technology (IT) firms and other businesses heavily dependent on the IT sector to identify the occupational areas of greatest need. The entities collaborated to develop apprenticeship curricula for identified occupations. The resulting Registered

Apprenticeship programs for these skills sets are operated in conjunction with internships for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and tuition reimbursement programs, which were already in place in Iowa. This endeavor has been so successful that, as IEDA recruits new IT companies to Iowa, the TAI Registered Apprenticeship Program has been one of its selling points. IWD staff recruit apprentices as they work with job seekers in need of new or updated skills. Depending on each employer's needs, workforce staff may use the National Career Readiness Credential tests or other assessment instruments, provide soft skills training, and provide help with resume writing and other services to prepare job seekers for apprenticeship opportunities.

The Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) - was designed to increase the employment of persons with disabilities by pooling agency resources and providing technical expertise to employers throughout Iowa. Members of this group include staff from IVRS, the Department for the Blind, Veteran's Administration, Small Business Administration, Division of Persons with Disabilities, Workforce Development, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Drake University, and Iowa Medicaid. Persons from high school transition age to the aging population are represented. Members of this group present to individual employers as well as employer organizations throughout the state. At present, much attention has been raised by this group to inform employers about Section 503 Rules for Federal Contractors. Internal tools and resources have been provided to staff of IVRS to assist in educating employers about compliance with Section 503. Additionally, this group presented a conference in August, 2015, to assist in education on hiring persons from diverse backgrounds, including persons with disabilities, and the value these individuals present to the workforce. In Iowa, the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in the last decade; therefore, business and industry are considering populations that they traditionally did not pursue in hiring. With the limited number of work-ready job candidates, the conference agenda was geared toward emphasizing the benefits to employers of hiring persons with disabilities. IVRS is striving to create these connections during this economic opportunity.

Diversity Specialists - Another strategy that IVRS is using with business and industry is creating partnerships that embed diversity specialists in the business. Through a contract, IVRS collaborates with a business diversity specialist through sharing of service costs for IVRS eligible Job Candidates. The specialist then strives to recruit and retain individuals with disabilities in the place of employment. While only one of these arrangements currently exists, IVRS is working to expand these arrangements so that there is one diversity specialist in the geographic area of every IVRS area office.

Providing an integrated service system for employers can be accomplished similar to following the model developed by the workforce partnership in Burlington. This model ties in the community college, the special services and supports of IVRS, adult education, TANF, career pathways, etc. It provides industry the resources and supports they need and want, without involving extra unnecessary contacts and services not required. It provides a streamlined system for recruitment and retention assistance to meet their skill and labor shortage needs. In rural areas where there isn't a workforce office, IVRS can take the lead in developing the system and involve and invite workforce to travel out when those meetings with business occur so that workforce development uses their resources wisely and avoids unnecessary travel and duplication. The community

conversations have already started to develop this system with IVRS being the point of contact in communities where IWD is not located and the businesses are advising VR of what they want and VR is involving the appropriate partners to the table.

To strengthen the development and ongoing implementation of Iowa's sector strategies and career pathway systems, the Iowa's Sector Partnership Leadership Council (SPLC) will serve as a standing committee to the State Workforce Development Board and will have the following attributes:

- Planned membership includes broad education, vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, economic development and business and industry association representatives. The Council will include the following attributes at a minimum:
- Business led and oriented;
- Tasked to provide state level leadership, support, policy development, coordination and guidance to regional sector partnership development;
- In charge of convening an annual statewide workshop for regional sector partnerships from across the state to share best practices and promote statewide collaboration;
- Provision of technical assistance to the regional sector partnerships;

The Council will serve as an advisory committee to the State Board of Directors to help fulfill WIOA requirements.

E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

Engaging Educational Institutions

One of the best ways to ensure that future workers will meet the new and evolving skill requirements for jobs is for partnership with postsecondary educational institutions. To meet the skill needs of employers, partnership with educational institutions are critical to provide the needed training to create a pipeline of skilled workers. One-Stop staff works with local institutions and businesses to identify and create applicable training for occupations in need. To engage young people in the workforce system and educate them about the labor force, relationships with K-12 are invaluable, but it doesn't stop there. There must be a coordinated and continuous effort made by and in harmonization with all of Iowa's educational entities.

Iowa has 60 colleges and universities listed under the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, including the community colleges, four-year institutions, and regents. Included are:

- two research universities,
- nine master's universities,
- nineteen baccalaureate colleges,

- twenty-one associate's colleges.

In addition, eleven special-focus institutions and three baccalaureate/associate's colleges operate in the state. The Board of Regents, State of Iowa, a governing board, oversees the state's three public universities - the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Northern Iowa.

Effective July 1, 2017, following the competition and the awarding of the Title II funds, all 15 of Iowa's community colleges are providers of adult education and literacy services. Since as early as 1918, Iowa's community colleges have been committed to preparing a skilled workforce to contribute to Iowa's economic growth and stability. Iowa's 15 community colleges educate over half (51.6 percent) of all Iowa residents enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the state and, as such, serve a critical role in the state reaching its Future Ready Iowa goal of 70 percent of Iowans in the workforce with education or training beyond high school by 2025.

As grant recipients for Title II funds, Iowa's community colleges are well poised to support the needs of adult learners, to effectively incorporate workplace skills and workforce training and to provide high quality educational instruction to participants in adult education and literacy activities. As partners, the community colleges have been engaged with business and industry in addressing the talent pipeline. In several regions, community colleges are the service providers for Title I Youth and Adult, Dislocated Workers as well as providing the physical space for the one-stop centers therefore offering a full range of assistance to job seekers.

One-Stop staff are partnering with schools to provide information to students through workshops in the classroom, providing educators with information on how to access workforce services and use LMI in the classroom, as well as career fairs and career days. Career days have been a successful way to partner with K-12, local post-secondary educators, businesses and One-Stops to provide information to young people about post-graduation options. State leaders realize that it is critical to continue to develop improved relationships and to engage educational leaders and innovators at all levels.

To further enhance partner engagement with educational institutions, the State of Iowa is improving the way it manages and disseminates the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Customers interested in training opportunities are made aware of all training options available to them through the Eligible Training Provider List. Eligible providers listed include community colleges, regent universities, private universities as well as other training programs including Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Youth programming is among the many critical updates under WIOA and active involvement with Iowa's educational institutions is essential to operating successful youth programs across the state. State-level coordination and support is also important to creating and implementing necessary system changes to support improved workforce delivery programs reaching Iowa's youth.

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development

Programs such as the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development, a state-led interagency initiative designed to better align policies and programs and to encourage collaboration

among multiple state and community agencies on youth-related issues, will be the transforming force behind real improvements.

Youth programming is among the many critical updates under WIOA and active involvement with Iowa's educational institutions is essential to operating successful youth programs across the state. State-level coordination and support is also important to creating and implementing necessary system changes to support improved workforce delivery programs reaching Iowa's youth. The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council is an example of a state-led interagency initiative designed to better align policies and programs and to encourage collaboration among multiple state and community agencies on youth-related issues and is the transforming force behind real improvements. The purpose of the ICYD Council is to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels; increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services and other supports for youth; and improving and coordinating state youth policy and programs across state agencies. IWD has been a dedicated partner of ICYD since 1999 and has representation at the leadership and work group levels. IWD has valuable relationships and partnerships as a result of ICYD and looks for opportunities to be a part of ICYD best practices.

The ICYD Council members are leaders of 11 state agencies are listed below:

- Iowa Department of Education
- Department of Human Rights
- Department of Human Services
- Iowa Workforce Development
- Child Advocacy Board
- Commission on Volunteer Service
- Department of Public Health
- Early Childhood Iowa
- ISU Extension and Outreach
- Judicial Branch, Juvenile Courts

The ICYD Council meets quarterly to receive reports from state agencies and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), review progress of current activities, review data, and establish priorities and recommending actions on the many issues affecting youth. The prioritized goal of increasing graduation rate to 95% by 2020 was selected due to its high visibility and as a summative measure of youth development efforts, and the many cross-agency issues that contribute to youth graduating from high school (e.g. substance abuse, family, employment, teen pregnancy, and mental health). Each of the agencies represented on the Council has a role in achieving this goal and work to address these issues as individual agencies, and together as a team, to maximize efficiency in state government and make the best use of existing resources.

ICYD has participated in a variety of state and national youth initiatives and has been recognized nationally (e.g. National conference of State Legislatures, National Governor's Association, Forum for Youth Investment, and Children's Cabinet Network) for its work in coordinating youth development efforts. The ICYD Council provides a

venue to enhance information and data sharing, develop strategies across state agencies, and present prioritized recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly that will improve the lives and futures of Iowa Youth.

The ICYD Council has several emerging activities in 2016/2017:

- Full implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Project, which assesses the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs. The overall goal of the project is to reduce recidivism of juvenile offenders by ensuring that the right services are provided to the right youth at the right time.
- Implementation of the Juvenile Reentry System, which guides efforts to reduce the historical baseline recidivism rates for youth returning from placement in the Boy's State Training School.
- Develop strategies to eliminate the educational achievement gap for under-represented students.
- Utilize strategies developed in the performance Partnership Pilot proposal in existing statewide initiatives to improve outcomes for disconnected youth.
- Provide core membership to new youth-serving advisory groups and to consolidate multiple advisory groups into the existing ICYD council.

F. Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Engaging Other Education and Training Providers

To further enhance partner engagement with other education and training providers, the State of Iowa is improving the way it manages and disseminates the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Eligible providers currently listed include community colleges, regent universities, private universities as well as other training programs including Registered Apprenticeship Programs. The way information on ETPL is obtained, maintained, and disseminated is being improved in Iowa with updates to the ETPL and policies ongoing. As progress continues to move Iowa's workforce delivery system and services forward, additional outreach to, and engagement of, other types of training providers will also advance. State-level coordination and support is also important to creating and implementing changes to support improved workforce delivery programs reaching ALL Iowans. Programs such as the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development inform policy and recommend programs targeting youth-related issues. These types of programs are the result of successful engagement with other entities and training providers.

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council (ICYD)

The purpose of the ICYD Council is to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels; increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services and other supports for youth; and improving and coordinating state youth policy

and programs across state agencies. IWD has been a dedicated partner of ICYD since 1999 and has representation at the leadership and work group levels. IWD has valuable relationships and partnerships as a result of ICYD and looks for opportunities to be a part of ICYD best practices.

IWD is represented on the HSED Task Force will assist the Iowa Department of Education in exploring new ways to help adults pursue and complete their HSED.

IWD/WIOA has looked for ways to expand partnerships with foster care and is a part of a workgroup assessing college retention for the foster student - to discuss issues and solutions to improve college retentions and outcomes for the foster students.

Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates

Dropout prevention; enhancing outcomes; because of expanded connections to the WIOA Youth Service Provider and American Job Center/IowaWorks/One-Stop staff, IWD hopes to contribute to iJAG's performance outcomes for high school graduation, continuing education and experiential learning.

Aligning Youth -Focused Advisory Groups

The alignment of youth advisory groups will create more effective and efficient services and supports for youth and families. The Youth Services Workgroup created as a result of WIOA has reflected on the idea of blending with the ICYD Results Group. Agency representation on the WIOA Youth Services Workgroup is also a part of the ICYD Results Group. IWD works with the ICYD Council in with regard to career information targeted to youth; as well as youth rights and safety on the job.

Preparing a Future Ready workforce that readies ALL Iowans to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's workforce is the result of successful integration among education and training providers. Creating accessible and increased education and training opportunities for ALL Iowans that support the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the job market is equally important. ALL Iowans must be able to gain entrepreneurial skills and to learn business strategies and concepts through connection with Iowa's business leaders. The following action steps will support state strategies to further engage other education and training providers:

- Align with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce recommendations.
- Align with the Future Ready Initiative recommendations.
- Align with the NGA Work-Based Learning recommendations.
- Convene a youth-focused work group.
- Provide individuals and small businesses with guidance, to include business enterprises, asset development, and benefits planning, in small business start-up, operation, and effective management.

Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) proposal

The goal of Iowa's P3 project was to provide an effective bridge between high school and entry into college, training, or employment for disconnected youth to improve their

likelihood of a successful transition to adulthood. Iowa Workforce Development agreed to lead the project, partnering with the Department of Human Services and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, to contribute existing federal funding for the project. Other ICYD Council agencies also committed staff resources.

In October 2015, Iowa was awarded funds to implement the Juvenile Reentry System (JReS). Once fully implemented, JReS will guide efforts to reduce the historical baseline recidivism rates for youth returning from placement in the Boys' State Training School (STS), group care, and Psychiatric Medical Institutes for Children (PMIC's). A sub-committee of the ICYD Council, the Juvenile Reentry Task Force (JRTF), is implementing JReS and IWD has been involved in the planning since 2014.

PROMOTING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE (PROSPER) Promoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER) was designed and tested by researchers at Iowa State University in partnership with researchers at Penn State University.

Iowa was awarded a National Dislocated Worker Grant (formerly Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant) to develop and deliver job-driven services to dislocated workers and employers through the development of sector strategies. Iowa has partnered with Iowa Central Community College and the Iowa Department of Education to utilize these funds to support sector strategies across Iowa.

G. Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

The State's strategies include blending and braiding of funding to maximize the leveraging of other Federal, State, and local investments in order to enhance access to workforce development programs at all levels. State leaders realize the benefit and added strength that bringing a multitude of diverse agencies and programs together represents.

Adult Education and Literacy

The adult education and literacy (AEL) program is Iowa's front-line program to help adults without a high school diploma or equivalency. As part of the state procurement for the Iowa Skilled Workforce and Job Creation Fund (ISWJCF) allocated to Iowa's 15 community colleges, AEL services are being provided to individuals who need assistance acquiring the skills necessary to be successful in job training and employment. Funds from the state are leveraged with Title II funds, awarded through competition, to increase access to services through Your Future Starts Here Iowa

(<http://yourfuturestartshereIowa.org/>), a statewide portal for accessing adult education and literacy services including services targeting English Language Acquisition participants. The ISWJCF is distributed to the 15 community colleges based upon the state general aid (SGA) funding formula. However, state funds designated for English as a Second Language (ESL) are awarded based on application and by formula (percentage

of county served with limited English proficiency determined by average census survey and enrollment trends) to the receiving community college.

Funds received from state procurement for AEL programs adhere to the allowable use restrictions of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and subsequent adult education legislation. The \$5.3 million investment has supported efforts to integrate standards based instruction with workplace learning to prepare participants to successfully transition to postsecondary training and careers. The intent of the funds received by the community colleges is to expand services and improve the quality of AEL programs. These funds are meant to be the primary funds used for AEL services, with federal funds supplementing and supporting efforts to deliver services to all eligible participants.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

IVRS has met with the State STEMS Director to promote the ideas of how to expand high expectations for students with disabilities in the STEMS opportunities. IVRS also has a counselor or associate assigned to every high school and college in the State of Iowa to promote accessibility opportunities for students.

GEAR UP Iowa

The Iowa College Student Aid Commission has been awarded a second federal GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Grant totaling \$22 million, beginning in fall 2014. This seven-year project will support a cohort of about 6,300 students beginning in the 7th grade and will follow them as they progress through school. The program is a long-term partnership between Iowa College Aid, 12 partner school districts and nearly 40 partnering institutions of higher education and community-based organizations.

The students and their families will receive a variety of services aimed at preparing them academically, financially and inspirationally to enroll and succeed in college. Upon enrollment in a college, GEAR UP Iowa students will receive a modest scholarship for up to four years.

GEAR UP Iowa is charged with significantly increasing the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The Iowa College Student Aid Commission administers GEAR UP Iowa in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education and other state agencies; local school districts; postsecondary educational institutions; and community organizations, businesses, and industries.

The total of this seven-year Federal award of \$22,379,301 will include \$3,206,922 for the first year and represents 50% of the total project budget. The other 50% of program costs will be covered in the form of non-federal matching dollars from 36 partners across the state, totaling \$22,670,801.

State-Administered Financial Aid

The State of Iowa appropriated over \$70 million in scholarships, grants and loan forgiveness opportunities in 2015.⁶ This figure does not include financial aid awarded to students from institutional sources or appropriations to the state's public colleges and

universities. Private, Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities During the 2014-15 academic year, Iowa awarded 81 percent of its need-based scholarship and grant funding to students attending private, not-for-profit colleges and universities. This percentage was substantially higher in Iowa than anywhere else in the nation.

Iowa's largest grant program, the Iowa Tuition Grant (ITG), awards aid to students attending private, not-for-profit colleges and universities. ITG is Iowa's largest grant program and had approximately 10 times more funds in 2015 than the second largest program, the Iowa National Guard Educational Assistance Program.

The Iowa Vocational-Technical Tuition Grant and the Iowa Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant (Kibbie Grant) target students who are enrolled in career or technical education programs in areas with high workforce demand at Iowa community colleges.

While there are no scholarships and grants designated solely for students attending Regent Universities, Regent University students can apply for state aid through programs available to all sectors, including the All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship, the All Iowa Opportunity Foster Care Grant, the Iowa Grant (eliminated after 2014-15) and the Iowa National Guard Educational Assistance Program. In 2014-15, 6 percent of state aid was awarded to students attending Regent Universities.

Iowa will continue to leverage state, federal and private resources to increase educational access for ALL Iowans, including those with barriers to employment and traditionally underserved populations.

U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program

Since FY 2011 these grants have helped colleges form regional and statewide partnerships that allowed broad reform of educational and training delivery including innovative strategies for reaching participants who are non-traditional adult learners and other such learners.

The **Bridges2Healthcare** consortium lead an initiative to accelerate progress and improve retention and outcomes of adults in the healthcare industry in **Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin**. Bridges2Healthcare established Health Care Academies to provide targeted counseling, assessments, and other services to individuals interested in pursuing careers in healthcare. The individualized support provided by success coaches and retention specialists at these Academies prepare non-traditional students for classroom training before they begin the courses, assist individuals in accessing supportive services provided by the workforce system during their training, and guide program completers through career development after they have completed their programs.

The **Iowa-Advanced Manufacturing (I-AM)** consortium is an Iowa community college initiative to elevate advanced manufacturing, funded through a \$13 million grant awarded in 2012. All 15 of Iowa's community colleges are working to collaboratively build training capacity by developing and awarding certificates (non-credit and credit), diplomas, and associate degrees in the following signature programs: welding, machining, industrial maintenance, industrial automation, manufacturing technology, robotics, and transportation and logistics. In addition, these programs will be aligned with

third-party certifications, including the NCRC™, AWS, NIMS, and MSSC, which are part of the National Association of Manufacturers, endorsed Skills Certification System (NAMS).

“Each community college is doing a tremendous amount of work within their programs, with the support of more than 35 manufacturers and the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) to ensure that the I-AM initiative addresses and meets the skill needs of the manufacturing industry,” explains Stephanie Ferraro, I-AM Statewide Project Director.

The fourth and final round of TAACCCT grants, awarded a consortium of all 15 community colleges in Iowa a \$15 million grant to build training capacity in the areas of Information Technology, Healthcare, Utilities, and Manufacturing - also known as the “IHUM” Network. Grant funds will be used statewide to create more than 45 additional training certificates in the IHUM targeted areas. The **IHUM consortium** project was one of 71 awarded nationwide, the award is being used to support community colleges in developing partnerships with employers to educate and train individuals for in-demand jobs. Strategies addressed with the grant that will be leveraged include comprehensive career pathways, use of simulation and technology, intensive student support services, and statewide labor market information data related to employment opportunities. The project is supported by more than 30 businesses and business associations in Iowa.

Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE) and GAP

Both statewide programs are recipients of state appropriations from the Iowa Skilled Workforce and Job Creation Fund aimed at supporting participants achieve educational skills needed to address middle skill gaps in-demand industries.

The PACE funding has been used to implement a simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive process to navigate at-risk participants with customized support services, to acquire effective academic and employment training to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment. Target population includes:

- Persons deemed low skilled for the purposes of attaining gainful, quality, in-state employment.
- Persons earning incomes at or below two hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty level as defined by the most recently revised poverty income guidelines published by the United States department of health and human services.
- Unemployed persons.
- Underemployed persons.
- Dislocated workers, including workers eligible for services and benefits under the federal Trade Adjustment Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-210, as determined by the department of workforce development and the federal internal revenue service.

PACE programs include the following components:

- Measurable and effective recruitment, assessment, and referral activities designed for the target populations.

- Integration of basics skills and work-readiness training with occupational skills training.
- Combining customized supportive and case management services with training services to help participants overcome barriers to employment.
- Providing training services at times, locations, and through multiple, flexible modalities that are easily understood and readily accessible to the target populations. Such modalities shall support timeless entry, individualized learning, and flexible scheduling, and may include online remediation, learning lab and cohort learning communities, tutoring, and modularization.

The leveraging of resources includes the building upon the pipeline process established by PACE to better serve the academic, training, and employment needs of the target populations. The goals of the pipeline include:

- Strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations and industry representatives.
- Conducting and managing an outreach, recruitment, and intake process, along with accompanying support services, reflecting sensitivity to the time and financial constraints and remediation needs of the target populations.
- Conducting orientations for qualified participants to describe regional labor market opportunities, employer partners, and program requirements and expectations.
- Eliminating temporal and instructional barriers have been minimized or eliminated.

Each PACE program is actively supporting and developing career pathways and bridge curriculum that can be leveraged by the core partners with the following goals:

- The articulation of courses and modules, the mapping of programs within career pathways, and establishment of bridges between credit and noncredit programs.
- The integration and contextualization of basic skills education and skills training. This process shall provide for seamless progressions between adult basic education and general education development programs and continuing education and credit certificate, diploma, and degree programs.
- The development of career pathways that support the attainment of industry-recognized credentials, diplomas, and degrees through stackable, modularized program delivery.

In addition to PACE, the GAP program was established to provide funding to community colleges for need-based tuition assistance to support applicants completing continuing education certificate training programs for in-demand occupations. While funds are targeting toward tuition assistance, support is also leveraged for related certificate costs including but not limited to books and materials.

H. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

It is widely acknowledged that in today's ever-evolving economic and jobs climate, improving access to post-secondary credentials is an urgent need in Iowa and across the nation. Portable and stackable credentials are essential to developing an ever-progressing and Future Ready workforce. Postsecondary education and credentials are important to economic mobility for individuals in Iowa and across the nation, but according to a 2014 report released by CLASP, *Scaling Stackable Credentials*, many people can't afford to complete the requirements to earn a postsecondary credential; others find the process overwhelming. The full report can be accessed at: <http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondarysthash.oHutDB2M.dpuf>.

Future Ready Iowa

Iowa's Future Ready Iowa initiative aims to 70% of Iowans to have post-secondary credential beyond high school by 2025. The Future Ready Iowa initiative was created after Iowa received a National Governors Association grant in 2014 to develop a shared vision and strategies to improve the educational and training attainment of its citizens and the alignment of those degrees and credentials with employer demand. With Iowa's shortage of skilled workers to fill jobs in business, industry and non-profit organizations throughout, innovative solutions are being sought to close the skills gap through better alignment of education and workforce resources.

Career Coach is a Future Ready Iowa initiative in collaboration with IWD, IDOE, and the community colleges. Career Coach provides career pathways by region, access to the ETPL, and many other features to assist job-seekers in developing a personal career path through obtaining industry-recognized credentials and through direct contact with at-need employers.

Sector Strategies

Iowa's Unified State Plan goals include the robust development of sector strategies that engage employers in the continuous and dynamic development of programs and initiatives which are responsive to Iowa's existing and future labor-market needs. The Core Partners will work with industry to increase opportunities for all Iowans to gain the experience, skills, and credentials needed to obtain and main self-sustaining employment. Expanding and supporting sector strategies for in-demand industries will lead to closing critical skill gaps between Iowa's workforce and employers. Identifying and quantifying employers' education, training, and workforce needs and capturing those needs in an accessible and multi-tiered system will strengthen the ability of the job-seeker to connect with the appropriate employer(s). Job-seekers will be able to learn about industry recognized credentials and find opportunities to obtain seek out employers who value their experience and accept their industry recognized credentials.

Career Pathways/Registered Apprenticeships

Coordinated efforts will engage ALL Iowans in the career pathway process using innovative approaches in the delivery of career services. Key to these efforts will be the offering of a variety of career path navigation supports to enhance transition into the workforce for ALL Iowans. Coordinated action steps within Iowa's career pathways work will include:

1. Equipping workers with skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed for ALL Iowans to secure self-sustaining employment.
2. Ongoing supports so ALL Iowans can maintain self-sustaining employment and work to their fullest potential.

Specifically, Youth Services will make connections to statewide support systems, increase and enhance youth engagement, and build the capacity of educators for encouraging movement through the pathway options. Registered Apprenticeships will engage educational training entities to identify and enhance career pathways for Apprenticeship options.

Intermediary Network

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) plans to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Education for the purposes of expanding the Intermediary Network with the focus of serving students with disabilities to connect with career pathways. IVRS will fund up to \$1.5 million to support the Intermediary Network, which is delivered by the community college system. This expansion, focused on students with disabilities who have traditionally not been able to access career pathways, will develop the mechanism by which students with disabilities gain skills in occupations that are job-driven. This will be accomplished through improved work based learning strategies.

Enhance Iowa

Enhance Iowa originated with a \$15 million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant was part of a larger federal initiative called Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training or TAACCCT. Started in 2009, the TAACCCT program has issued a series of grants to community colleges across the nation for the purpose of putting people back to work. Hawkeye Community College was chosen to lead a consortium consisting of all 15 of Iowa's community colleges. This consortium, now known as Enhance Iowa, petitioned for and was awarded a \$15 million grant to train Iowans in skill sets needed by local employers.

The grant awarded to Enhance Iowa is the fourth and last of four TAACCCT initiatives. Each wave of grants focused on a specific industry or needed skill set by employers. Enhance Iowa's grant focuses on the areas of IT, healthcare, utilities and manufacturing. In total, 71 entities were given \$450 million in the final TACCCT award. The first wave of funds was allocated on October 1, 2014, and they will continue to be dispersed over a four-year period. All of Iowa's community colleges will receive a portion of the money, allowing them to purchase new learning equipment and offer more programs. 45 new programs will be offered across the Enhance Iowa consortium as a result.

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing is a statewide, integrated marketing campaign to promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing. This begins with building a positive perception of these careers while addressing misconceptions of work environment, safety, and wages. Learn more about why this is so important for Iowans. Elevate offers resources to the public specifically targeting those eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for workers, unemployed/underemployed Iowans, U.S. veterans, educators, along with K-12 students and their families. Elevate is a National Partner of the Manufacturing Institute's *Dream It. Do It.* This initiative works to change the perception of the industry and inspire the next-generation workers to pursue manufacturing careers.

I. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies and activities in the State.

Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

IVRS has worked with the Department of Economic Development as part of the Iowa Self-Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities. This program supports individuals with disabilities who want to have 51% ownership in a business. The program provides a Business Development Specialist to assist the individual with a disability to receive technical assistance, (i.e. feasibility study, development of the business idea, development of a business plan, etc.) and financial assistance (i.e. up to \$10,000 in funding to support start-up costs.) In addition, IVRS works with Small Business Development Centers and the IWD Small Business Development teams to provide necessary technical assistance.

The Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress (IPEP), an industry-led, CEO-level advisory board established by Governor Branstad in 2011 was charged with the task of continuously identifying and studying economic growth issues facing Iowa and recommend solutions and policy alternatives.

IPEP set out three guidelines for approaching the re-envisioning of Iowa's economic development roadmap. First, engage a broad range of economic development stakeholders from private industry, economic development and higher education to ensure broad-based input. Second, complete a comprehensive analysis of Iowa's industry clusters, development resources and economic assets. Finally, review and recommend the programs necessary for Iowa to strengthen its existing industry clusters and capitalize on opportunities for growth.

Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)

IEDA is charged with responsibility for coordinating four workforce training programs that deliver customized training to grow a skilled and talented workforce for Iowa business. Authorizing legislation is found in Chapters 260E, 260F, 260G and 15B of the Iowa Code. IEDA adopts administrative rules pursuant to Chapter 17A of the Iowa Administrative Procedures Act on how the programs are to be implemented. Three of the

four programs, 260E, 260F and 260G-Job Credits are implemented by each of Iowa's 15 community colleges within its merged area. The 15B program is implemented by IEDA.

The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (NJTP)

The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (NJTP or 260E) became effective July 1, 1983. The 260E is a business incentive program designed to assist with the cost of training employees in new jobs created by a business expansion or startup in Iowa. To be eligible for assistance, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing or assembling products, conducting research and development, or providing services in intrastate commerce. Retail, health and professional services are excluded.

Community colleges enter into contracts, referred to as training agreements with eligible businesses to establish a single or multiple projects to provide training to employees in new jobs. To fund the cost of training, colleges borrow money from investors in the form of bond certificates. Like other bonds, revenues are pledged for repayment with interest to certificate purchasers. Certificates are repaid by diverting a portion of the Iowa withholding tax generated by the new jobs into special funds controlled by the colleges. On average, the colleges sell about \$38 million in bond certificates annually.

The Iowa Job Training Program (IJTP)

The Iowa Job Training Program (IJTP or 260F) became effective July 1, 1985. The 260F program assists Iowa based businesses to train, develop and upscale work skills of their existing workforces to remain economically competitive. To be eligible for assistance, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing or assembling products, conducting research and development, or providing services in intrastate commerce. Retail services are excluded.

Iowa Code establishes a job training fund under the control of IEDA in the Workforce Development Fund. Source of funds is \$3 million in monies appropriated by the General Assembly for the 260F program. Funds are allocated to the community colleges based on the General State Aid Formula. Colleges enter into training agreements with businesses to provide services for training. A college submits to IEDA an application on behalf of the business for approval to use the allocated amount.

The Accelerated Career Education (ACE) - Job Credits

The Accelerated Career Education Program (ACE or 260G) became effective July 1, 1999. The 260G program assists community colleges to expand current training programs or to establish new programs for occupations most needed by Iowa businesses. To participate in 260G, a business must be engaged in interstate or intrastate commerce for the purpose of manufacturing, processing or assembling products, construction, conducting research and development, or providing services in interstate or intrastate commerce. Excluded are retail, health and professional services.

Iowa Code establishes the total amount of program job credits which may be allocated statewide in any one fiscal year. The total allocated amount is not to exceed \$5.4 million. A community college enters into a program agreement with a business to establish or expand a 260G training program. Colleges submit program agreements to IEDA for their

proposed use of allocated job credits. A job credit is based upon the hiring wage that the participating business would pay to an individual completing the training program. Instead of paying all withholding tax due to the State of Iowa, the business diverts a portion of the tax to the community college to fund the training program. The diverted portion is equal to the approved 260G job credit amount.

Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program, Iowa Code 15B

The Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program Act (15B) was enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 2014. The purpose of 15B is to increase the number of registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants to eligible apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeships are a proven approach to preparing workers for in-demand jobs and meeting the needs of business for a highly skilled workforce that can innovate and adapt. The program is administered by IEDA in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Only apprenticeship programs registered and meeting USDOL standards, known as a sponsor, are eligible for an IEDA training grant.

An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. \$3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

A key component of the unified plan is the ability to collect, maintain and update the critical information needed by all its stakeholders. Without timely, accurate, relevant, and accessible information, there can be no integration or efficiency in operation. There are several domains to the state operating systems:

1. Program implementation and operational system: Cross-agency alignment and provision of WIOA services requires a common system for collecting core data and reporting elements of the workforce delivery system. This promotes uniformity and consistency and increases efficiency through common tools, definitions and practice. Iowa's Workforce Development has been working on a product to share among core partners that will serve as a hub for intake in addition to tracking verifiable data and referrals. Through such an approach, Iowa is unifying data needed for performance reporting.

2. Labor Market Information (LMI) System: The LMI system provides the foundation for workforce analysis, research and strategic planning. The Division within Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) maintains a dynamic web site (<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/labor-market-information-division>) that provides data and information for individuals, workforce professionals, researchers, and economic development professionals and also produces customizable query tools using Tableau. Reports are available by region and local area such as workforce analysis reports, including employment and industry/occupation projections that will enable workforce partners to plan and coordinate their efforts more effectively. The Iowa Sector Partnership Leadership Council will use the most relevant and up to date labor market

information to expand and develop appropriate and employer driven sector partnerships in the region most in need.

3. Communication System: State-level communication and information is distributed to workforce stakeholders across all workforce programs through an e-mail newsletter through a distribution list developed and maintained by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). The list contains over 1,000 individuals who have signed up to receive notifications of major statewide workforce development news. Members of the e-mail distribution list include business leaders, legislators, policy makers, program administrators, nonprofit organizations and more.

Coordination with economic development strategies is a critical component of Iowa's plan and state leaders recognize the importance of coordination with economic development strategies to effect successful implementation of Iowa's Unified State Plan.

Statewide Laborshed Study Initiative Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) have launched a joint initiative to ensure that stakeholders in the workforce development system have up-to-date, common data for planning purposes, including local workforce development plans under WIOA, local economic development plans, and the effective implementation of individual programs and initiatives such as the WIOA core programs. Iowa's Laborshed Study was developed by the University of Northern Iowa in 1998 to identify and estimate labor availability based upon documented commuting patterns into a community. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) took on the responsibility of conducting the Laborshed Study in 2001. The Laborshed labor market information data generated aids local economic and workforce development officials in their facilitation of industry expansion/recruitment and their service to existing industry in the area. This labor supply study gives employers, economic development entities, workforce development entities, education professionals, students, and workers insight into the availability and characteristics of their local labor force which is not captured in any other manner. Between 2001 and June 2018, local economic development organizations, community colleges, and local utility partners were responsible for approximately 25% of the total cost incurred for each Laborshed Study. The remaining 75% was covered by IWD. This partial fee model made it difficult for many small and rural communities/counties to purchase a Laborshed Study for their local area. It also created inconsistencies in the geography and timeliness of data collection and study completion. While a statewide Laborshed Study has been conducted each year with financial assistance from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), due to the fee for service model on the individual basis, local and regional Laborshed Studies were not run in a systematic fashion as each local area chose if and when to complete a study. Starting July 2018, in partnership with IEDA, IWD will begin conducting at least one Laborshed Study in each of Iowa's 99 counties at no cost to the local or regional economic development organizations. The Laborshed data updates will be done on two-year cycles. Iowa Workforce Development will complete studies for approximately half (51 counties) the state in state fiscal year 2019 and complete the remaining half (48) in state fiscal year 2020. This biennial rotation will continue year after year. Even though the Laborshed Studies will be 100% funded by IEDA and IWD, IWD's Labor Market Information Division will continue to collaborate with local economic development officials to promote data collection, determine the most effective methods of delivering

the resulting information, and presenting to local stakeholders. The Laborshed Study begins with a survey of a community's employers. IWD asks employers (with 5+ employees) to provide a count of their employees by their residential ZIP code. In partnership with local workforce and economic development contacts, IWD attempts to ensure the participation of each community's largest employers (in terms of employment level) in the survey. After a sufficient response is achieved, IWD aggregates the data and through the use of geographic mapping software displays the Laborshed (commuting) area, by ZIP code, of a community's workforce. Once the Laborshed area has been documented, IWD contracts with a third party vendor to conduct a telephone survey of individuals (18 to 64 years of age) living within the Laborshed area. This survey consists of questions covering numerous labor force related topics including but not limited to: employment status, likeliness to change/accept employment, occupation, industry, current/desired wages, current/desired benefits, education/training, commuting, and job search methods. Prior to both the employer survey and the residential telephone survey IWD works with local economic developers to coordinate the publication of a news release in the community and surrounding areas to improve survey participation and ease residents' concerns of possible phone scamming in the area. When the residential survey is completed, IWD projects the results upon the local population using estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. This initiative will allow the entire state of Iowa to have up-to-date data for planning purposes, regardless of the size or location of the community, and will consequently improve the ability to have data-based planning for economic and workforce development in the state. In particular, it will better position Local Workforce Development Boards, after the completion of the realignment of Iowa's local workforce development areas as required by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, to perform more effective strategic planning with local workforce development plans based on accurate and up-to-date regional analysis. Future Ready Iowa Coordinator The Future Ready Iowa initiative is meant to reach the goal of having 70 percent of Iowa's labor force achieve postsecondary credential or degree by the year 2020. As part of this initiative, the Governor recommended and the General Assembly created a new position at IWD of Future Ready Iowa Coordinator. This position is intended to coordinate efforts across partner agencies and programs, including the WIOA core programs and the IEDA, to help Iowans meet this ambitious goal. IWD has hired this person and the agency has been holding meetings across the State, which will continue throughout the year.

b. State Operating Systems and Policies

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in **Section II Strategic Elements**. This includes—

1. The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—

A. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

Labor Market Information (LMI) Division

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) website, www.iowalmi.gov, provides data and information related to Iowa's labor market, economy and workforce. The website contains, but is not limited to, information about the following areas: wages employment; unemployment; industry and occupational employment; industry and occupational projections; unemployment insurance statistics; Laborshed Studies; employer surveys; education outcomes; career information; and other labor market related publications.

Information is organized by topic (i.e. indicators, industry, occupation and research) and uses Tableau to provide and display data for users such as job seekers; employers, IWD staff; economic developers; academic institutions; government agencies; nonprofit organizations; legislators; grant writers; labor organizations; consultants and other partners in an informative manner.

Career Coach

Career Coach is a Future Ready Iowa initiative in collaboration with IWD, IDOE, and the community colleges. Career Coach provides career pathways by region, access to the ETPL, and many other features to assist job-seekers in online career exploration. It provides users with local occupational level wages, industry trends, employment projections (growth/decline), occupational tasks, skills, education/training needed by occupation, where to find types of education/training, demographic data, and current job postings for employers in Iowa. The tool also includes a career assessment tool (short and long versions), military occupation crosswalk, career cluster, and resume builder.

Career Coach brings together federal, state and private sources under one simple-to-use on-line tool for anyone looking to explore career options by providing them the information to make career decisions. The data sources include the US Department of Commerce, US Department of Labor, US Department of Education, US Census Bureau, Employment & Training Administration and Careerbuilder.

Department of Education

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) provides assessment and accountability services through a web based data system called TOPSpro (Tracking of Programs and Students) Enterprise (TE) for all eligible and funded adult education and literacy service providers. This system accounts for Title II's required demographics, case management and performance tracking of reportable individuals, participants and their associated periods of participation. TE is designed for data specialists in adult education to be compliant with data reporting requirements and, including statewide assessments and related accountability software to accurately measure progress, mastery of skills, and competencies needed to both complete, and advance one or more educational functioning levels (EFL). It automates scoring, collects student demographic data, tracks agency and individual student performance, generates reports, and aggregates data for state and

federal year-end reports. Features of the data system and relevant processes include the following:

- Collecting information for the purposes of programmatic and annual reporting.
- Immediate access to the data for tracking enrollment, eligibility of services, attendance and reporting on WIOA benchmark attainment.
- Timely submissions to the department for monitoring and compliance review of participant's data and progress. TE records each student's goal when enrolling, as well as their measurable skill gains for each period of participation.
- A direct link to an eTest module which includes a state approved assessment for determining participant eligibility and skill gain.
- Scores from the eTests are scaled to an EFL to guide instructional placement. The module also includes a diagnostic of the overall class competencies to assist in lesson plan development of targeted skills.

Progress and post assessments are administered according to the AEL approved Assessment Guideline Policy for the current program year. For program years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, the department intends to use the same data system to meet program-specific requirements for collecting and reporting data for WIOA performance reporting requirements. While the department has entered into an agreement with Title I and III in the development of a shared system that incorporates the required modules of AEL, this system (Geographic Solutions) will not be implemented until fully vetted which may require an extended use of TE. The reporting structure for the AEL module must be based on National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines, which were retained under WIOA.

Data Collection

The data collection process begins with program staff at agencies funded by the Adult Education Family Literacy Act inputting the data at each site during the program year. Data collected from AEFLA funded agencies is aggregated at a statewide level through the web based portal. The annual data aggregation and data validation begins July 1 of each year. The purpose of the annual data validation process is to compile state and federal year-end reports due to ED:DAEL annually, December 31.

Performance measures include all elements in the federal NRS reports, including enrollment, attendance hours, completion of an EFL and advancement of one or more levels, separation before completion, and persistence within a level. Additional performance measures include attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and placement, retention, or completion of postsecondary education, training, or unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

Iowa's Title II has developed on-line tools to assess the enrollment rates of students enrolled in ABE, ASE and ESL respectively monthly and is publishing outcome data on attainment of equivalency diplomas.

Products

Research is conducted on several labor market related topics from which analysis and report are produced. Below are the following products:

- *College Student Analysis* - a survey of Iowa college students that asks information about their field of study, their desired occupation/industry, desired wages, desired benefits, their intentions to reside in Iowa following graduation and factors that would influence them to stay or relocate. Reports are provided for the state and three sections that cover community colleges, regent universities and private college students.
- *Education Outcomes*- assists colleges in determining the effectiveness of their educational programming as it relates to the students' transition into the workforce
- *Employment Benefit Analysis* - a survey conducted with IWD employers across Iowa are asked to provide information regarding benefits they currently offer their full-time and part-time employees in a regional analysis
- *Laborshed Studies* - provides local community leaders, economic developers, site selectors and existing or prospective employers a flexible tool for understanding the workforce characteristics and supply of labor for their local labor market based upon commuting patterns. Program also includes statewide data collections.
- *Workforce and Economic Development Status Reports* - this report aggregates many different economic, workforce, and education resources into document for Iowa and regional economic marketing regions.
- *Workforce Needs Assessment* - this report analyzes the needs of Iowa's workforce through a survey of Iowa employers and other labor demand data resources.
- *Unemployment Insurance Statistics* - monitors and analyze data related to Iowa's unemployment benefits and taxes for federal and state reporting, along with research purposes.
- *Dislocated Worker Survey* - this program collects data from employees who have been or will be dislocated, collecting data regarding occupation, wage, age, education level, services needed and future plans.
- *Promise Jobs Reporting* - analyze the employment outcomes of Promise Jobs participants as it relates to employment, wages and the industry they work.

Data is collected and reported for the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics federal-state cooperative programs:

- *Current Employment Statistics*- an establishment survey that provides detailed industry data on employment, hours and earnings of workers on nonfarm payrolls for the state and metropolitan statistical areas
- *Local Area Unemployment Statistics* - monthly and annual estimates of total labor force, employment and unemployment are prepared for the state, counties, large cities, metropolitan statistical areas, micropolitan areas, combined statistical areas, IWD regions, community college and congressional districts, and council of governments
- *Occupational Employment Statistics*-estimates occupational employment and wages paid by employers for the state, metropolitan statistical areas and nonmetropolitan areas known as balance of state

- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages - a near census of monthly employment and quarterly wage information by industry. Data is available at both the State and county level

Products are created under the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's Workforce and Labor Market Information Grants for job seekers; businesses/employers; workforce and labor market intermediaries; program and service planners of educational institutions and community organizations; policy makers; partners and other customers. The products include:

State and regional industry and occupational employment projections.

- The occupation projections provide detailed information on the estimated activity for each occupation in areas of employment, growth rate, total annual openings, wages, career preparation and skill requirements.
- The industry projection provides detailed information on the estimated activity for each industry in terms of employment and growth

Iowa Licensed Occupations - provides information concerning occupations in Iowa that require a license, certificate or commission issued at the State level such as licensing requirements, associated fees and examination information.

- *Iowa Wage Report*- report uses OES occupational wages and updates them to make wages more current for the state, metropolitan statistical areas, balance of state areas and IWD regions
- *Iowa's Workforce and the Economy*- an annual statewide economic analysis
- *Middle-Skill Jobs in Iowa*- provides information on the mismatch of job opportunities and worker skill sets in Iowa and the IWD regions
- *Business Connection Guide* - a business operations resource directory filled with valuable information on starting and running a business
- *Career, Industry and Population Report* - provides an overview of the state's industry, occupation and population trends in a short, concise format describing growth rate patterns for each
- *Employers and Professional On-Line Reference Guide*- a resource for planning a business activity or changing existing practices in their organization
- *Career Planners and Job Seekers On-Line Reference Guide*- a resource of essential websites and tools aimed at directing individuals' career or job path towards professional fulfillment
- Also several state and region career exploration resources that are used to make informed career decisions. The publications provide occupational information on education levels, high-demand and high-growth jobs, STEM and Green Jobs.

B. Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers*.

Data Collection and Reporting Processes

Core partners in Iowa realize there are currently significant data system limitations. The main barrier to joint case management is the inability to share data through a streamlined process due to the lack of a common participant identification method. Information collected is not aligned across core partners due to statutory regulations (e.g., Adult Education does not require a Social Security Number to receive services). Currently, core partners collect their data using their respective state agency systems. There is currently no ability to track participants across programs and no mechanism to identify when a participant has exited from all applicable WIOA core programs.

To begin to overcome these challenges, Iowa has initiated work on a common intake system that will:

- customize and expand the existing intake system used in IowaWORKS offices that assists in determining program eligibility and promotes co-enrollment;
- assign a unique identifier to each program participant that will be used to link participants in each of the partner data systems;
- gather required reporting elements common across all partners;
- create a common portal by which customers may access services;
- allow participants to self-refer to partner agencies and partner agencies to refer participants and track referral follow-up and outcomes;
- and create a staff dashboard with the status of each program participant and shares data across agencies.

IWorks will continue to operate as Iowa Workforce Development's data collection and case management system for:

- Wagner-Peyser Act
- WIOA Title I
- Veterans Employment and Training programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- PROMISE JOBS

IWorks includes a self-service web-based labor exchange system called IowaJobs.org which is available to job seekers and employers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Iowa will implement an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision-making.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) requires core agencies to develop an integrated system that can be used as a common application for services across the workforce delivery system as well as a tool for common data reporting. OMB 1820-0508 outlines revisions to the RSA-911 State-Federal Program for Vocational Rehabilitation Case Service Record and OMB 1205-0NEW provides guidance related to data collection required by section 116(d) of the WIOA including 1) State Performance Report (data by entities that administer WIOA core programs, 2) Local Area Performance Report for Title I, Subtitle B programs, and Eligible Training Provider Performance Report for Title I programs. Although these new reporting requirements significantly

expand the amount of data collection required by the agency, they also provide an opportunity for Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to move out of silos and identify ways the agencies can collaborate to provide a seamless electronic system to provide Iowa's citizens access to information about services available to them through the core programs and the ability begin the application process from any electronic device connected to the internet—even from the comforts of their own homes. First, IVRS technology staff must assess our current data system and analyze its effectiveness in data collection, analysis, case management and reporting.

Iowa Rehabilitation Services System

The Iowa Rehabilitation Services System (IRSS) is an internal case management system that is owned, maintained, and updated by IVRS. The original concept of IRSS was the development of an interactive, intuitive system designed to meet agency needs for case management, financial management, contract management, vendor management and reporting. After many years of development and scale-backs on the scope of the project, IRSS was put into use in October, 2008. The system that was deployed at that time was developed to meet the data collection and financial needs of the agency. Limited reports were developed and included in the initial deployment to assist with case management. Shortly following implementation, the IVRS IRSS Priority Management Team (PMT) was formed and charged with the responsibility of developing improvements to the IRSS Case Management System to meet the financial, case management and reporting needs of the agency and move the system closer to the original concept. Representatives of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau and Administrative Services Bureau, in collaboration with IT developers and project managers, develop the projects and business rules for all IRSS development.

Over the past seven years, many improvements have been made to the system, including major projects to financial processing for Disability Determination Services, and batch processing of Ticket-to-Work data and revisions to streamline data entry and make IRSS more efficient. The IRSS PMT Committee has also been assigned the task of moving the agency to a paperless case management process to meet future needs.

Considering the development timeframes for past changes to reporting requirements, the requirement changes to the RSA-911 Case Service Record Report in 2013 took several months of development and testing and extensive training with field staff. Proposed changes to the RSA-911 due to WIOA, as well as proposed data collection and retention for common performance accountability requirements will dominate IRSS development over the next several months and, as previously stated, will require much collaboration with IT staff in the other core programs. Significant changes in reporting requirements include:

- Reporting quarterly on open and closed cases rather than annually on closed cases;
- Collection of data related Pre-employment Transition Services for potentially eligible students;

- Compilation of financial data to assure Title I and Title IV expenditures meet the provisions of WIOA;
- Data collection and reporting after the date of exit;
- Development of a common application for all core WIOA programs including upload and download of common data;
- Determination of what data can be collected from other core WIOA programs through a common data dashboard and data elements that need to be added to IRSS or maintained outside of IRSS and imported through batch processes.

The IRSS PMT Committee is awaiting final reporting requirements from RSA. Implementation of the new quarterly reporting requirements is slated for FFY17. Once reporting requirements are finalized, development to meet the new requirements will be targeted for a completion date of 10/1/16.

Along with data required for federal reporting purposes, placeholders for other data that will be useful in measuring the effectiveness of the VR program will also be developed into IRSS, for instance, involvement in third-party contract programs. However, not all data used to measure the effectiveness of the program will be developed into the Iowa Rehabilitation Services (IRSS) Case Management System. Data collection sources maintained outside of IRSS include:

- Transition Alliance Program (TAP) matrixes
- Making the Grade matrixes
- Iowa TIER for PETS and other transition data
- Department of Education Data Dashboard (in development)
- Iowa Career Pathways Dashboard (in planning stage)

Another initiative underway to minimize the burden of data collection across core agencies includes development of an integrated system among the core programs. Members of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation IRSS Project Management Team and Information Technology Department have met with representatives in similar positions in other core programs to begin discussions on a common data collection and common application system. Preliminary discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as current development structures that can be used to move toward a common system. It was determined that the current Iowa Workforce Development system already contains the structure and code to work across systems and can be built upon to provide a common data and application system. The work of this team is in its infant stages, but the team is hopeful that a common system can be in place to meet annual reporting requirements for FFY17, and if that cannot be accomplished, the team will develop strategies to share data for individual reporting until the common system is deployed. Some of the core programs have their own development teams while others work with outside vendors so that will add some complexity to determining a target completion date for development of the system.

Iowa Workforce Development, in collaboration with other WIOA core programs including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, is also in the beginning stages of

developing a public dashboard containing information on sector strategies and career pathways. The dashboard will provide stakeholders with the following information:

- Identification and information on high-demand jobs;
- Pathways to high-demand jobs;
- Information on training including internships and apprenticeships;
- College and career planning information;
- Information related to sector partnerships and career pathways integrating labor market information;
- Information on how to finance a chosen pathway.

The public dashboard is slated as Phase 1 development. Phase 2 includes development of an executive dashboard that can be used for analysis and as an evaluative tool by core programs. Measurements such as job placement data, job creation in high-paying jobs, increased family income, increased career counseling in secondary and post-secondary, and focus on STEM fields have been identified as target areas.

Regarding specific WIOA Performance Measures:

WIOA Performance Measures 1-3: IVRS does not currently collect 2nd quarter wage information. IVRS plans to get the wage information from IWD but it has not been built in the IVRS case management system as this is a new RSA requirement. We were able to go back and review data from 214, which is reported below.

WIOA Performance Measure 4: IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the effectiveness in serving employers. We are working with our State Rehabilitation Council as well as Core Partners to develop a coordinated data collection system.

WIOA Performance Measure 5: IVRS does not currently collect data regarding the education level of program participants except at application and closure. On a quarterly basis, IVRS will be collecting as a RSA911 requirement the education level obtained throughout the participation in the program. RSA has not sent final requirements for collecting this data.

IVRS reviewed data in efforts related to identifying WIOA Performance Measures for the second and fourth quarters of future years. To do this we went backwards and reviewed data from 2014, which will serve as a baseline for employment outcome and wage data which is being collected through a project with IWD.

Based on the data generated by this methodology, at this point in time IVRS will continue to evaluate and develop the baseline for these performance measures and then within two years request to negotiate performance targets that appear appropriate. At this juncture the data is only a snap shot of performance and trends must first be established. IVRS did attempt to establish baseline data from looking at past quarters. Based upon performance indicators for % of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program was 465 with the total number of people exiting to be 912. This was the same data gleaned from the % of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 4th quarter after exit from the program. The median earnings were \$4731 (second quarter after exit). The % of participants who obtained recognized

post-secondary credentials or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalency during participation was 275 at the second quarter after exiting the program.

As Iowa looks to support the coordinated implementation of state strategies through its various operating systems, detailed planning and coordination by core partners will continue. The state intends to analyze what is needed, what is valuable, and what is currently in place to build an agile project plan. This analysis will occur in Program Year 2016 and 2017, with implementation beginning in PY17. This analysis will ensure that the work completed is cost effective and of value to all partners.

* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system.

Statewide Policy Development

The integrity of local direction is fortified by the guidance provided by representation of the local region's businesses, labor, educators and local elected officials - in short, the local Workforce Development Board (WDB). In each region, the WDB is supported by the Iowa Workforce Development Board, and Iowa state agencies, in guiding the coordinated implementation of Iowa's Integrated Service Delivery system in each of the 15 regional workforce development areas that is responsive to the job seekers, employers, Registered Apprenticeship and other partners within the communities in each region. In addition to Wagner-Peyser, Trade, Veterans, New Iowans and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, the Iowa Integration Service Delivery model will provide services to Unemployment Insurance recipients and PROMISE JOBS participants.

The merger of multiple partners and services into a seamless delivery system in a well-integrated One-Stop Center requires planning, policy, and commitment. As a primary partner in each center, it is the policy of Iowa Workforce Development to provide a base level of core services, which in turn are complemented and enhanced by the partner services that may be of a more intensive level or involve training. In this way, integration is emphasized and duplication is minimized. This approach also promotes the maximum use of Workforce Investment Act funds for training activities. The Iowa Legislature passed House File 2699 (2008) that required Iowa Workforce Development to develop a plan by January 1, 2009 that would coordinate the workforce delivery system in a more efficient, cost-effective manner while improving services for customers; co-location and integration of all workforce and job training programs, and improves the effectiveness of the regional workforce system. This workforce delivery system is known as the Iowa Integrated System Delivery model.

Adoption of the Iowa Integrated Service Delivery model by the local WDB in collaboration with Iowa Workforce Development includes the development of local functional leadership whose responsibility is to manage the delivery of products and services regardless of their program source. This includes referrals made to employers, registered apprenticeship programs and other benefits that would benefit the job seeker in their search for employment. Iowa has three functional teams that deliver services in a comprehensive manner at the core and intensive level, which include skill development, and placement. The philosophy of Iowa's Integrated Service Delivery model applies to services provided to both job seekers, employers and future workforce participants.

Policy guidance for integrated service delivery in the One-Stop System is provided in the form of field memos, a Policy and Procedure Manual, and through the Iowa**WORKS** Integration Policies Guidebook (Iowa Workforce Development, February 27, 2012).

3. State Program and State Board Overview

A. State Agency Organization

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

State Agency Organization

Iowa Workforce Development

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) administers Iowa's Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and WagnerPeyser Act programs. IWD commits its resources to Iowa's prosperity by working to ensure the income security, productivity, safety, and health of all Iowans. The department strives to provide safe workplaces, provide a productive and economically secure workforce, provide all Iowans with access to workforce development services, and create a model workplace. In coordination with the Division of Labor Services and the Division of Workers' Compensation, the department is comprised of the following areas of services:

- Administrative Services Division
- Communications Division
- Labor Market Information Division
- Operations Division
- Information Technology Division
- Appeals Division

Director Beth Townsend has general supervision over the various areas within IWD. The director prepares, administers, and controls the budget of the department and its divisions along with Michael Mauro who is the Division of Labor Workers' Compensation Commissioner.

Administrative Services Division

The Administrative Services Division provides a variety of services to keep the agency operating smoothly and to assist employees working in the IWD administrative offices. The following is a short list of administrative support functions provided:

- employee services
- building management
- office services
- printing services
- financial reporting
- accounting

Communications Division:

The Communications division within IWD works to communicate all aspects of the agency to external and internal stakeholders quickly and effectively. It is the responsibility of the communications division to respond to all media inquiries in a timely and efficient manner.

Labor Market Information Division

Edward T. Wallace is the Deputy Director and as such provides general oversight and direction to the Labor Market Information Division. The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division collects, analyzes and prepares a wide array of labor market data including the unemployment rate, employment levels, industry and occupational statistics, wages, projections, trends and other workforce characteristics for the State of Iowa as a whole as well as for other defined geographic areas within the State. It is the mission of the Division to produce and deliver information in a reliable and timely manner in order to inform data-driven decisions for business, career, educational programming and economic development.

Operations Division

The Operations Division provides a variety of services to businesses, workers, and the citizens of Iowa by collecting unemployment insurance taxes, maintaining the Iowa Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, and making payments to eligible jobless workers. The Operations Division is also responsible for the delivery of various state and federally funded employment and training services. The regional one-stop centers and offices provide a variety of services to meet the workforce and workplace needs of job seekers, dislocated workers, unemployed persons, and Iowa businesses through partnerships of state and local service providers. They provide job counseling, job training, job placement, and assistance to special needs populations. The division administers the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, which includes the following:

- Adult
- Dislocated Worker
- Youth
- Rapid Response
- National Emergency Grants

The division also administers worker profiling and reemployment services including:

- Alien Labor Certification Program
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- PROMISE JOBS
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- Wagner-Peyser Job Placement
- Job Insurance Benefits Navigation
- Unemployment Insurance Assistance
- Bonding
- Assistance Navigating Local Veterans Employment Opportunities
- Disabled Veterans Opportunity Program
- WorkKeys
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program

Information Technology Division

The Information Technology Division within IWD helps develop, maintain, and manage all of the necessary information technology services utilized by both IWD employees and customers using IWD's variety of services.

Appeals Division

IWD's administrative law judges working within the Appeals Division, hear and decide administrative appeals regarding unemployment insurance benefits.

Division of Labor Services

The office of the Labor Commissioner was created by the General Assembly in 1884. The Division of Labor administers a variety of services to employers, contractors, and other entities involved in creating and managing workplace safety. The following services are managed by the Division of Labor:

- Amusement Parks and Rides Inspection
- Asbestos Abatement Licensing
- Boiler Inspection
- Child Labor
- Contractor Registration
- Elevators and Escalators
- Hazardous Chemical Required Reporting
- Minimum Wage and Wage Collection
- Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Education
- Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement
- Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) Recordkeeping

Division of Workers' Compensation

The Workers' Compensation Law was enacted by the General Assembly in 1913. The law provides medical services and wage replacement benefits to workers who sustain

injuries arising out of their employment. The Workers' Compensation Law is administered by the Division of Workers' Compensation Commissioner. Iowa was one of the first states to provide benefits for injuries, occupational diseases, and occupational hearing losses sustained by workers. Injuries resulting in death, permanent disability, or temporary disability must be reported to the commissioner. If a compensation agreement cannot be reached, the employee may request a hearing before a deputy commissioner that covers the judicial district where the injury occurred. Decisions are reviewed by the commissioner and may be appealed to the district court and Supreme Court.

Iowa Workforce Development Organization as Related to the Unified State Plan Process under WIOA Attached

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) works with the Iowa State Board of Education to provide support, supervision, and oversight for the state education system that includes public elementary and secondary schools, nonpublic schools that receive state accreditation, area education agencies (AEAs), community colleges, and teacher preparation programs. Iowa's adult education and literacy programs assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency, assists adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children, and assists adults in completing a secondary school education. This chart is designed to reflect the line of authority from the authorized state official signing the state plan extension to the state director for adult education. The line of authority goes from the state director for adult education to the bureau chief of the Bureau of Adult, Career and Community College Education to the division administrator of the Division of Community Colleges to the Director and Executive Officer of the State Board of Education. The Director is the authorized State Official who has the authority to sign Iowa's Adult Education & Literacy State Plan.

Adult Education and Literacy Organizational Chart Attached

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The mission of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to work for and with individuals who have disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals. Disability Determination Services Bureau is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for disability benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs. Rehabilitation Services Bureau assists eligible individuals to become employed. Persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services have a wide range of disabilities. Most offices are already co-located in the One-Stop Centers across Iowa. Vocational Rehabilitation is a State-Federal program. The Federal share is 78.7%; the State share is 21.3%. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau has 14 area offices and 32 service units. Administrative Services Bureau provides support to the other elements of the Division through the functions of fiscal accounting, budgeting and payroll; statistical records, reporting and closed case file control; personnel management and collective bargaining administration; purchasing and property control; information systems and the physical plant management

of the Jessie Parker Building. Office of the Administrator is responsible for overall administration of the statewide programs. The administrator determines program scope and policies, promotes public interest and acceptance, directs budget funds, develops program plans and provides for staff development, research and evaluation. Under the umbrella of the administrator are the State Rehabilitation Council and the Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Group.

Iowa Department for the Blind

The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, community and service organizations, as well as, the general public about the true capabilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. IDB actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction, and collaboration with all constituencies. The Department for the Blind believes that with the right skills and opportunities a blind or visually impaired person can and should be competitively employed and live within their community of choice. Iowa Department for the Blind collaborates with many stakeholders to provide opportunities for independence and employment throughout the state. IDB provides employment services to blind and visually impaired Iowans who are looking for a job or want to retain or advance in their current career. Iowa is consistently ranked as one of the nation's highest in the percentage of blind and visually impaired people successfully placed, employed and remaining in jobs. Its library features one of the world's most comprehensive collections of reading materials in alternative formats (e.g., Braille and digital audio). The Department continues to utilize innovative methods and technology to provide quality services to blind and visually impaired people in Iowa. The administrative rules define the specific standards, criteria and guidelines that govern the Department's operations. The administrative rules are based on the legislation defined in the Iowa Code. The rules are created through a process of confirmation by the Department, the public and legislative rules committees.

Iowa Department for the Blind Organizational Chart Attached

B. State Board

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

State Workforce Development Board

Iowa is governed by the State of Iowa Constitution (Iowa Constitution) and the Iowa Code. As State of Iowa administrative agencies, the core partners must act in compliance with the Iowa Constitution and Iowa Code. As an elected official in Iowa's constitutional democracy, the Governor must do the same.

The State Board's membership is thus dictated by Iowa Code at Section 84A.1A(1), which is available online at www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/84A.1A.pdf. Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) gives the State Board two classes of membership: voting and nonvoting. The voting members of the State Board have been the same since its inception. The General Assembly has added nonvoting members at various points throughout the State Board's existence.

The statutorily prescribed voting membership structure is set forth at Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1)(a), which states:

The governor shall appoint the nine voting members of the workforce development board for a term of four years beginning and ending as provided by section 69.19, subject to confirmation by the senate, and the governor's appointments shall include persons knowledgeable in the area of workforce development. Of the nine voting members, one member shall represent a nonprofit organization involved in workforce development services, four members shall represent employers, and four members shall represent nonsupervisory employees. Of the members appointed by the governor to represent nonsupervisory employees, two members shall be from statewide labor organizations, one member shall be an employee representative of a labor management council, and one member shall be a person with experience in worker training programs. The governor shall consider recommendations from statewide labor organizations for the members representing nonsupervisory employees. Not more than five of the voting members shall be from the same political party.

And the nonvoting members are listed in Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1)(b):

The ex officio, nonvoting members are four legislative members; one president, or the president's designee, of the university of northern Iowa, the university of Iowa, or Iowa state university of science and technology, designated by the state board of regents on a rotating basis; one representative from the largest statewide public employees' organization representing state employees; one president, or the president's designee, of an independent Iowa college, appointed by the Iowa association of independent colleges and universities; one superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, of a community college, appointed by the Iowa association of community college presidents; one representative of the vocational rehabilitation community appointed by the state rehabilitation council in the division of Iowa vocational rehabilitation services; one representative of the department of education appointed by the state board of education; one representative of the economic development authority appointed by the director; and one representative of the United States department of labor, office of apprenticeship. The legislative members are two state senators, one appointed by the president of the senate after consultation with the majority leader of the senate, and one appointed by the minority leader of the senate from their respective parties; and two state representatives, one appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives after consultation with the majority leader of the house of representatives, and one appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives from their respective parties. The legislative members shall serve for terms as provided in section 69.16B.

Because Iowa's State Board membership structure is prescribed by statute, it may only be changed via legislation that amends the Iowa Code. The constitutionally required process for enacting legislation must be followed in order to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) to change the membership structure so that is in compliance with all of the membership structure requirements in section 101(b) of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA).

The Iowa Constitution sets forth core rights and responsibilities of the government and citizens of Iowa. Among the subjects addressed in Iowa Constitution is how a statute in

the Iowa Code is enacted or amended. No State of Iowa administrative agency is authorized to enact legislation, either by the Iowa Code or Iowa Constitution — meaning none of the WIOA core partners have the legal authority to unilaterally amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board’s membership structure meets the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA. Nor does the Governor have legal authority to act unilaterally to amend the Iowa Code.

Article 3, Section 1 of the Iowa Constitution defines the Iowa General Assembly as the Iowa Senate and House of Representatives. It also vests in the General Assembly the “legislative authority of this state.” Thus, only the bicameral Iowa General Assembly is authorized to enact legislation under the Iowa Constitution.

A bill may originate in the Senate, the House of Representatives, or both (via companion bills). A bill may be amended, altered, or rejected by either chamber. Article 3, Section 16 requires a bill to pass both the Senate and House of Representatives be presented to the Governor for consideration.

Article 3, Section 16 of the Iowa Constitution requires that, in order for a bill to become a law, the Governor must sign the bill. Put otherwise, the core partners are dependent upon the General Assembly enacting legislation to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1), and the Governor signing such legislation into law, in order to change the State Board membership structure to meet all of the requirements in section 101(b) of WIOA.

Iowa does not have a fulltime legislative body. Ours is a part-time legislature. Under Article 3, Section 2 of the Iowa Constitution, the annual legislative session of the General Assembly begins on the second Monday of January each year. In 2017, that is January 9. There is no mandatory end date for a legislative session in the Iowa Constitution. Typically, a session ends sometime between April 1 and July 31 in a given year.

Even though the Governor is often involved in negotiations with legislators over matters of policy and budgeting, the Governor has little control over when the General Assembly completes a session. And most importantly with respect to the WIOA Unified State Plan, no core partner has any say in when a legislative session ends. The General Assembly concludes a session when it finishes its business.

After the General Assembly adjourns for the session, it does not reconvene until the second Monday of the following January. After the close of the 2017 legislative session, the Iowa General Assembly will not convene until January 8, 2018, unless a special session is called (which is a rarity and usually precipitated by a natural disaster that requires emergency appropriations or an economic downturn that necessitates changes to the state budget).

The General Assembly conducts its business as Senate and House leadership see fit, from the majority leaders to the committee chairs. No core partner has a say in whether a proposed bill will be brought up for debate, let alone whether a majority of the General Assembly’s 150 legislators will vote for its enactment. Thus, no core partner is able to commit with any specificity to timelines or benchmarks when it comes to the General Assembly enacting legislation during the 2017 session.

However, the core partners can commit to having a bill introduced in each of the Senate and House of Representatives on January 9, 2017, the first day of the legislative session. The core partners will notify USDOL and USDOE when the legislation has been formally introduced. After that, each core partner can commit to having its legislative liaison register in favor of the bill. The core partners will notify USDOL and USDOE when each core partner's legislative liaison has registered in favor of the bill. The core partners will also advocate enactment of the legislation by the General Assembly throughout the session.

Lastly, the core partners also commit to notifying USDOL and USDOE when one of the General Assembly takes one of the following actions:

- 1) Enacts a bill to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board's membership structure complies with all of the requirements of WIOA section 101(b); or
- 2) Ends the 2017 legislative session (whenever that might be) without passing a bill to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board's membership structure complies with all of the requirements of WIOA section 101(b).

The General Assembly is its own entity, populated by 150 independently minded legislators who answer to their constituents and not administrative agencies. Under the Iowa Constitution, the General Assembly is one of three independent, coequal branches of state government, charged with carrying out the legislative function in our state. The core partners cannot bind the Iowa General Assembly to any sort of timeline or benchmark for monitoring purposes.

Action Plan:

1. Between now and January 9, 2017, engage stakeholders and members of the General Assembly in dialogue to lay the groundwork for the enactment of legislation that will amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) to change the State Board's membership structure to meet all of the requirements of WIOA section 101(b), as required by USDOL and USDOE.
2. Work with the Governor's office and Legislative Services Agency to prepare draft legislation so that companion bills to amend Iowa Code section 84A.1A so that the State Board's membership structure meets all of the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA are introduced in both houses of the General Assembly on or about January 9, 2017, and will report to USDOL and USDOE that they have done so.
3. The core partners will each register in favor of the bills as soon as possible thereafter, and report to USDOL and USDOE that they have done so.
4. During the 2017 legislative session, the core partners will discuss the proposed legislation with stakeholders and members of the General Assembly to encourage enactment.
5. The core partners will report to USDOL and USDOE:

- a. If the General Assembly enacts the proposed legislation that amends Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) to change the State Board's membership structure so that it is compliant with all of the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA; or
- b. If the 2017 legislative session ends without passage of a bill that amends Iowa Code section 84A.1A(1) so that the State Board's membership structure is compliant with all of the requirements of section 101(b) of WIOA.

i. Membership roster

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Membership Roster

The Board members consists of nine voting members. The voting members represent employers, employees and a nonprofit workforce development organization. The current board chair is Andy Roberts and the vice-chair is Dee Vanderhoef.

Iowa Workforce Development Board Voting Members

Employer Representatives

- Caroline Hicks, Swine Graphics Enterprises, LLP, Osceola
- Suzanne Kmet, Peddicord Wharton Law Firm, West Des Moines
- John Krogman, Connect-A-Dock, Inc., Atlantic
- Dee Vanderhoef, Iowa City

Employee Representatives

- Ken Sagar, Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, Des Moines (Statewide labor organization representative)
- Andy Roberts, Plumbers and Steamfitters Union 33, Des Moines
- Stacey Anderson, GMP International Union, Dike
- Robert Gilmore, I.U.P.A.T. District Council 61, Des Moines

Non-Profit Workforce Development Organization Representative

- Norene Mostkoff, HCI Care Services/VNS of Iowa, West Des Moines

Ex-officio Non-voting Members

- Gary Steinke, Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Des Moines
- Drew Conrad, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls
- Greg Lewis, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Des Moines
- Steve Ovel, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids
- Greer Sisson, U. S. Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship, Des Moines
- Jeremy Varner, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

- Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Des Moines
- David Mitchell, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Des Moines
- State Senator William Dotzler, Waterloo
- State Senator Jake Chapman, Adel
- State Representative Kirsten Running-Marquardt, Cedar Rapids Iowa
- State Representative Greg Forristall, Macedonia

The membership roster will be transitioning as four seats vacate and three filled by new members. The Senate must vote to confirm them. Future membership will adhere to the timeline for new members to join the State Board. Iowa will also attempt to update the statutory provisions governing the State Board to reflect the State's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce.

ii. Board Activities

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

During WIOA implementation, the core partners have collaborated to perform the State Board's required duties and responsibilities under the Act with the help of required partner agencies. The primary method of collaboration has been work groups involving partners and stakeholders. The work and accomplishments of these groups is detailed in this plan. Moving forward, however, the State Board will need a more robust operational framework in order to fulfill its duties and responsibilities under WIOA.

Currently, Iowa's State Board does not have standing committees to assist in their efforts to formalize a structure to engage partners and stakeholders in Iowa's workforce development system. The State Board will add standing committees to ensure a higher standard of state board functioning. The standing committees will be required to hold regular meetings and to report to the State Board on a regular basis. Once established, the committees will be charged with the following tasks:

- Review and make recommendations regarding plans and reports required under WIOA
- Serve as an advocate of plans and strategies to the Board, IWD leadership, policy makers and stakeholders;
- Serve as an administrator to collect and manage workforce and talent development information on behalf of the Board;
- Review state, regional and local plans and activities as required by WIOA and provide status reports to the Board;
- Perform state workforce board functional responsibilities identified in ss. 101(d)(1) through 101(d)(12) of WIOA and provide recommendations to the Board;
- Review progress reports and provide status updates to the Board;
- Assess opportunities and recommend amendments to the Board's Strategic Plan;
- Convene and connect talent development resources to drive innovative workforce solutions that support economic development strategies;

- Consult with state, regional and local resources to champion collaborations and partnerships within the workforce system;
- Serve as convener to gather thought leaders and practitioners to perpetually evaluate talent development system(s);
- Serve as a connector of resources to other agencies, service providers, collaborators, initiatives or projects;
- Serve as a consultant to state/local workforce boards and partners regarding strategies and opportunities;
- Review talent development systems and networks and recommend innovative solutions and integration of resources;
- Recommend education and outreach strategies and campaigns to continually align resources and partners; and
- Perform other functional requirements of the state workforce board as determined by the state board or core partners.

Iowa will also attempt to update the statutory provisions governing the State Board to reflect the State's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. This will include the creation of an operations team, tentatively consisting of representatives from the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Education, the Economic Development Authority, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Iowa Department for the Blind. The Operations Team will provide staff support to the Iowa Workforce Development Board of Directors to achieve improved alignment of the core WIOA programs and the state's education, workforce and economic development programs. The Director of the Department of Workforce Development will designate the person to coordinate and lead the operations team. Staffing and administrative costs for the operations team shall be provided by the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Education, the Economic Development Authority, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other potential partners as deemed appropriate.

The Operations Team will be tasked with the following:

- Coordination and staffing of activities of the State Board.
- Facilitation and coordination of all research, reports data, analysis, and recommendations associated with the operations team and its purposes.
- Provision of regular updates to the Workforce Development Board on the status of activities of the operations team and the progress made in aligning programs pursuant to the purposes of the board.

In legislation, Iowa will also seek to create a Policy Council that will advise the State Board on proven and promising practices with respect to workforce service delivery from across the State and nation. The Policy Council will also make policy recommendations to help create a more integrated workforce development system that is responsive to current and future labor-market needs.

4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

A. Assessment of Core Programs

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

Assessment of Core Programs

The WIOA performance accountability measures in Section 116 will be used to assess the effectiveness of programs and service providers statewide and ensuring continuous improvement in the service delivery system. In an effort to increase awareness, accuracy, and transparency, performance reports will be published for each region. These reports allow the state and regions to track and monitor performance regularly. Programs are assessed on their fiscal management, program implementation - including enrollment and performance benchmark attainment, and data management. Additional assessment includes partnership and career pathway efforts for PY 16. The state will target programs for technical assistance that fail to meet the state performance benchmarks. Failure to meet the performance benchmarks for two consecutive years could result in the reduction or elimination of funding.

The state's assessment of core programs, which aligns to Iowa's Performance Measures (Appendix A), uses the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) performance criteria that build in accountability through appropriate performance and outcome standards for the state and each program. Beginning with Program Year 2016 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017), the state will utilize the following WIOA Performance Measures for all WIOA core programs: adult, dislocated workers, youth, adult education and literacy (AEL), vocational rehabilitation and Wagner-Peyser (Wagner-Peyser will be excluded from performance measures 4 and 5. Based upon Federal guidance, some core partners are collecting and establishing baseline data to be reported for implementation at a later date.)

1) Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

For youth: Placement in Employment or Education 2nd Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program.

2) Employment 4th Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

For youth: Placement in Employment or Education 4th Quarter After Exit: The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

3) Median Earnings: The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

4) Credential / Diploma: The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. Program participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent shall be included in the percentage counted as meeting the criterion if such participants, in addition to obtaining such diploma or its recognized equivalent, have obtained or retained employment or are in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

5) Skill Gains: The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.

6) Serving Employers: The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers (yet to be determined).

Iowa intends to negotiate performance standards annually (as was done with WIA) with each respective federal agency. As appropriate, Iowa will instruct each local area on procedures for negotiating their local performance standards or asking them if they desire to adopt the same level as the state. Iowa's performance level goals for these primary performance measures will help Iowa achieve continuous improvement for each new program year.

In addition to measuring annual performance outcomes, quarterly progress is measured and shared with the local areas. The local areas are able to use these reports to identify areas for improvement. Should local areas fall significantly behind on their goals, they will be required to submit a performance improvement plan outlining the steps needed to bring their performance outcomes up to standards. The Core partners works with the local programs to monitor performance measures consistently throughout the year and provide technical assistance to improve outcomes. Programs receive an annual monitoring (on-site or desk review) to assess fiscal, program and data management performance. The new WIOA performance measures will be added to current federal measures and the same processes will be used to measure quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs.

IVRS uses a data metrics system for analysis of program effectiveness as well as for measuring the success of a number of innovative system designs that have been implemented during the last year including but not limited to:

- Provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities transitioning from school to post school outcomes;
- Provision of work experience opportunities to students with disabilities in transition through the Making the Grade contracts
- Participation of the potentially eligible student population in pre-employment transition services;
- Engagement of and delivery of services to the aging population through the Employment Services Contract with Iowa Department of Aging

- Infusion of systemic alignment of state agency services through the Medicaid aligned funding agreement
- Provision of strategic employment services in the health care industry through the Unity Point Contract
- Accomplishment of goals with the Collaborative Transition Protocol resulting in more systemic planning to achieve student outcomes through the Collaborative Outcomes for Students
- Expansion of the Assistive Technology Specialist program

B. Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

C. Previous Assessment Results

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

The core partners have developed a work group to address performance and data issues. This has resulted in the development of the participant service account. This group will continue to meet as the partners to collaborate on WIOA implementation. The assessment based on past performance in the primary indicators of performance set forth in WIOA section 116 will serve as the foundation on which the core partners will measure the effectiveness of Iowa's workforce services delivery system.

The eventual plan is for the work group to evolve into a team that monitors the system's achievements on an ongoing basis to identify strengths and weaknesses in the system. This continuous self-assessment will be an important part in the partners' ongoing efforts to improve workforce services delivery in the state so that the system is streamlined and responsive to current and future labor-market needs.

The state will bring a diversity of stakeholders together to review and create effective policies, programs, and opportunities for Iowa's current and future workforce. A center piece of this collaborative effort will be a policy council advising the State Board on proven and promising practices and policies that support an integrated system responsive to labor market needs. Statewide policies will be developed that support Iowa's businesses in offering creative and nontraditional in-roads to careers that meet the needs of ALL Iowans.

C. Previous Assessment Results

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner

programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

The core partners have developed a work group to address performance and data issues. This has resulted in the development of the participant service account. This group will continue to meet as the partners to collaborate on WIOA implementation. The assessment based on past performance in the primary indicators of performance set forth in WIOA section 116 will serve as the foundation on which the core partners will measure the effectiveness of Iowa's workforce services delivery system.

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D. Evaluation

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

Evaluation

The Core partners works with the local programs to monitor performance measures consistently throughout the year and provide technical assistance to improve outcomes. Programs receive an annual monitoring (on-site or desk review) to assess fiscal, program and data management performance. The new WIOA performance measures will be added to current federal measures and the same processes will be used to measure quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs.

In the past several years, a number of state agencies have focused their efforts toward the goal of increasing earnings by growing industries in targeted clusters on both the supply and demand sides of the labor market equation. These efforts are further supported by a number of good management practices, codified by Iowa's Accountable Government Act, by which all state departments must produce a number of documents and make them available to the Governor and others in the executive branch, the legislature, and the

general public via the state's Results Iowa <http://www.resultsiowa.org/> Internet site. These documents include:

- An agency strategic plan, updated annually,
- A corresponding performance plan with measurable goals for key strategies,
- A performance report, which details annual progress toward goals in the performance plan.

Assured Focus on Business and Customer Needs

Resources in the One-Stop delivery system come in a variety of forms. Some partners contribute funding for core services, intensive services, and training, while others may provide in-kind services. Regardless of the form, the Local Service plan is the mechanism employed by the state to ensure these resources are focused on the individual business and customer needs.

The local planning guidance asks the local workforce investment board to specifically address the status of the labor pool in context with the labor market, identifying the workforce investment needs of business, job seekers, and workers in the region. The board will then describe how they will use its resources and oversight authority to address workforce needs in the region and develop the annual budget. The state will review and comment on each of these plans and, if necessary, make recommendations on how to maximize their resources to address local workforce needs.

The Employers' Councils of Iowa in each region of the State provides another level of input directly from businesses regarding Iowa Workforce Development and One-Stop Center operations. Finally, the State has provided a number of forums and roundtables throughout the State, primarily focused on business, to further ensure that customer needs are being met.

The core and partner agencies within Iowa's workforce system recognize that evaluating each agency's performance in isolation of the other services that are available in a community will not adequately support Regional Workforce Development Board in addressing capacity issues in their communities. It will be important to continue working together to identify stronger methods to evaluate the combined impact of all Iowa "One-Stop" Service Partner agencies on their communities to determine our collective success. This approach will be necessary to improve community support of business and job seeker interests.

5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. For Title I programs

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

i. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Distribution of Funds for Core Programs - Youth program

Sub-state Allocation Process for the Title I Youth Program Funds

Eighty-five percent of the funds Iowa receives for the WIOA youth employment and training activities are allocated to the regions. Iowa allocates 70 percent of that amount using the following federally prescribed formula:

- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of disadvantaged youth in each region compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the excess number of unemployed individuals in each region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

The remaining 30 percent of regional allocations are based on the number of disadvantaged youth in each region as compared to the total numbers of disadvantaged youth in the state. This option is used to diminish the impact of unemployment concentrations dictated by the federal formula and focus on low-income youth.

The federal statute also requires that a “hold harmless” provision be applied to the WIOA Youth funding streams. This provision ensures that each region will receive a share of funds of at least 90% of the average share of funds received by that region in the previous two years.

ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Distribution of Funds for Core Programs - Adult program

Sub-state Allocation Process for the Title I Adult Program Funds

Eighty-five percent of the funds Iowa receives for the WIOA adult employment and training activities are allocated to the regions. Iowa allocates 70 percent of that amount using the following federally prescribed formula.

- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of disadvantaged adults in each region compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the excess number of unemployed individuals in each region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state;
- 33 1/3% of the funds are allocated on the basis of the number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

The remaining 30 percent is allocated in two parts: 1) one-half is based on the excess number of unemployed in each region as compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state; 2) one half is based on the number of disadvantaged adults in each region as compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the state. In this way, allocation credit is provided to support low-income individuals in the state.

The federal statute also requires that a “hold harmless” provision be applied to the WIOA Adult funding streams. This provision ensures that each region will receive a share of funds of at least 90% of the average share of funds received by that region in the previous two years.

iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

Distribution of Funds for Core Programs - Dislocated Worker program

Sub-state Allocation Process for the Title I Dislocated Worker Program Funds

Of the funds received by Iowa for dislocated worker employment and training activities, the state allocates 70 percent to the regions using the following data and giving equal weight to each factor:

Insured Unemployment Data: For the most recent calendar year, the monthly average number of individuals who were receiving unemployment insurance.

Unemployment Concentrations Data: Based on the most recent calendar year, regions with unemployment rates above the state average.

Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data: The number of employees during the most recent calendar year that were impacted by a mass layoff or plant closing.

Declining Industries Data: During the most recent 24-months, the total number of jobs lost in the most recent four quarters as compared to the previous four quarters.

Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data: During the most recent calendar year, the number of farmers/ranchers who have delinquent loans as reported by U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Long-Term Unemployment Data: For the most recent calendar year, the monthly average number of individuals who meet the definition of long-term unemployed. An individual is considered to be long-term unemployed if he/she was out of work for 15 weeks out of a continuous 26-week period of time.

For the dislocated worker allocation process, equal application of all six factors of the formula ensures that all possible economic and workforce elements that exist in each local area impact the allocation process. In this manner, factors that might favor or disadvantage certain areas are equally applied.

The federal statute also requires that a “hold harmless” provision be applied to the WIOA Dislocated Worker funding streams. This provision ensures that each region will receive a share of funds of at least 90% of the average share of funds received by that region in the previous two years.

B. For Title II:

i. Multi-year grants or contracts

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) is the designated state agency responsible for administering funds and providing program and performance oversight to eligible local providers of adult education and literacy (AEL) activities selected through a competitive bidding process. Current AEL providers approved under Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhere to State and federal grant expectations, as measured through their status updates, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During program year 2016-2017, the department implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that determined the eligible entities to be awarded funds starting July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. Following the first one-year grant, department retains the right to fund the grant recipient for up to two (2) consecutive program years 2018-2019, and 2019-2020. The exercise of grant renewals after the first year of funding will be made on a program by program basis. Renewals will be contingent on the grant recipient's ability to successfully implement the terms of the grant, to meet performance expectations, and to provide value to the community. After this multi-year award cycle recipients may have the option of applying for a grant extension. This grant extension can be renewed in subsequent years until the department determines that a new multi-year competition for the grant needs to occur.

Through the process, the department was charged with identifying, assessing, and awarding multi-year grants to eligible entities throughout the state to ensure that access of services would be provided in every county in Iowa. An eligible entity is defined as an organization that can demonstrate past effectiveness (performance data demonstrating improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low literacy in reading, writing, math, English language acquisition and other relevant areas as well as outcome measures related to participant employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training) in providing adult education activities to eligible participants and may include all entities defined by WIOA 34 CFR Part 463.23. The department will use up to 82.5 percent of the state allocation for the grant awards. The specific purpose of this grant application is to fund programs that can demonstrate effectiveness in:

- assisting adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- assisting adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that—
 - are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and
 - lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;

- assisting adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- assisting immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in—
 - improving their—
 - reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English; and
 - mathematics skills; and
 - acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Eligible providers will be required to be a full-service adult education program providing instruction at ALL educational functioning levels (EFL) (six Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) plus all six English as a Second Language (ESL), based on identified needs of the region. Programs must also prepare adult learners for and support them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. Eligible providers are required to offer these activities, per the Iowa WIOA Unified State Plan:

- Adult Education;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Literacy; and
- Workforce preparation activities.

Eligible providers may also offer any of the following, as needed, per 34 CFR Part 463.30, Subpart D:

- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

Eligible providers may also offer up to twenty percent (20%) of their allocation providing approved Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals as needed, per 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart F.

The funding allocated to each service area will be based on up to 85 percent on the literacy needs identified as determined by reviewing the number of citizens needing literacy services (including those without a high school diploma and those with limited English language skills) within each county based on data from the American Community Survey and participants served. The remaining percentage of funds will be allocated based on effectiveness of serving participants through performance in subsequent years with year 1 and year 2 being used for incentive funding for applicants to plan, develop and implement Integrated Education and Training activities in their service areas.

A separate competition for Sec. 243 funds, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education, will be conducted using the same timeline, demonstrated evidence of

performance and responses to considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA along with specific state requirements.

The following steps will be taken in conducting the AEFLA competitions:

- March 15, 2017: Department published Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the priorities in the approved State Unified Plan.
- March 28, 2017: Department provided a bidders' conference and technical assistance.
- March/April 2017: Department established a review panel.
- May 1, 2017: Due date for AEFLA grant applications.
- May 2017: Reviewers reviewed and scored AEFLA grant applications.
- June 10, 2017: Department announced AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding.
- July 1, 2017: AEFLA grant providers began multi-year grant cycle, programming, and funding.

The department uses the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA to fund eligible providers in addition to specific state requirements including program, instructor and professional development standards. Through the grant application process, entities must provide narrative details to demonstrating how they will meet each consideration. The review of proposals will include rating responses to each of the considerations in addition to the alignment of the proposed activities with needs for services in the intended service area as reviewed by the regional workforce development board. The evaluation of cost of service, relative to need and cost efficiency along with financial internal controls, will also be accessed.

To determine if an applicant is an entity of demonstrated effectiveness, all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve skills of low-literate adults in the applicable academic areas related to their grant application. Prior recipients will use data from the student data management system, TopsEnterprise, to show how they have met state-negotiated performance measures for all student levels, as well as for English language learners. New organizations will be provided forms to show demonstrated student learning gain, including low-literacy level and English language learners. An applicant also will be required to demonstrate ability to adhere to the Assessment Policy Guidelines in recording and tracking participant enrollment and progression. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will be eliminated from the competition. Funded providers will be monitored and required to demonstrate continuous quality improvement.

ii. Ensure direct and equitable access

Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) uses developed internal processes to ensure that there is direct and equitable access to the grant funds. All currently funded providers and all other identified eligible agencies receive a grant or contract application notification by e-mail. This includes all known community-based organizations, community colleges, libraries, literacy councils, public housing authorities, and any other provider that is eligible pursuant to Section 203(5). An announcement is posted on the Iowa Grants website at <https://www.iowagrants.gov/>.

In addition to the general distribution of the sections 225, 231 and/or 243 application notifications, the department provides application information at conferences, workshops, and other activities attended by potential providers. The department requires all eligible providers for sections 225, 231 and/or 243 to use the same application process. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. Statewide leadership activities are provided through contracted service providers in compliance with state contracting requirements. The department has also developed interagency agreements with the Department of Corrections to provide the appropriate and necessary services for returning citizens.

The department ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts the department with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. The department believes that these approaches meet the requirements specified in AEFLA and is satisfied that every effort is made to ensure direct and equitable access.

C. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The federal vocational rehabilitation basic support state grant in Iowa is divided between the Iowa Department for the Blind and the Iowa Department of Education - Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the ratio of 19 percent to 81 percent. This is a historical agreement and has been in place for in excess of 40 years. The U.S. Department of Education - Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) acknowledges the 19/81 ratio between the agencies. This is apparent at the time of grant awards by RSA. The total allocation of basic support dollars to the State of Iowa are granted by RSA to the two state agencies in the ratio of 19 percent to Iowa Department for the Blind and 81% to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

6. Program Data

A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

Management Information Systems

With WIOA requiring common performance standards and a single outcome reporting structure across state agencies including the Iowa Department of Education (adult education and literacy), Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Department for the Blind, and Iowa Workforce Development (Title I employment and training and Wagner-Peyser), data alignment and integration are paramount. From April 2015, a series of inter-agency meetings have been held to formulate Iowa's plan for data alignment and integration under WIOA. These cross-agency workgroup meetings established a plan to build upon Iowa Workforce Development's (IWD) central data warehouse and reporting mechanism. This system will provide the integrated data structure allowing for a single system for both standard and "ad hoc" reporting capabilities for WIOA stakeholders, as well meeting WIOA federal reporting requirements.

A series of subcommittees with subject matter experts reviewed WIOA requirements and data definitions, necessary program adjustments for common measures, system enhancements to capture necessary data, and business rules for both proper integration of data and reporting functions. The project is being overseen by the Performance Accountability workgroup.

Core partners in Iowa realize there are currently significant data system limitations across core partners in an integrated case management environment. The main barrier to joint case management is the inability to share data through a streamlined process due to the lack of a common participant identification method. Information collected is not aligned across core partners due to statutory regulations (e.g., Adult Education does not require a Social Security Number to receive services). Currently, core partners collect their data using their respective state agency systems. There is currently no ability to track participants across programs and no mechanism to identify when a participant has exited from all applicable WIOA core programs.

To begin to overcome these challenges, Iowa has initiated work on a common intake system that will:

- customize and expand the existing intake system used in IowaWORKS offices that assists in determining program eligibility and promotes co-enrollment;
- assign a unique identifier to each program participant that will be used to link participants in each of the partner data systems;

- gather required reporting elements common across all partners;
- create a common portal by which customers may access services;
- allow participants to self-refer to partner agencies and partner agencies to refer participants and track referral follow-up and outcomes;
- and create a staff dashboard with the status of each program participant and shares data across agencies.

IWorks includes a self-service web-based labor exchange system called IowaJobs.org which is available to job seekers and employers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. IWorks will continue to operate as Iowa Workforce Development's data collection and management system for:

- Wagner-Peyser Act
- WIOA Title I
- Veterans Employment and Training programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- PROMISE JOBS
- Food Assistance Employment & Training

ii. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

State's Plan to Integrate Data Systems

As Iowa looks to support the coordinated implementation of state strategies through its various operating systems, detailed planning and coordination by core partners will continue. The state intends to analyze what is needed, what is valuable, and what is currently in place to build an agile project plan. This analysis will occur in Program Year 2016 and 2017, with implementation beginning in PY17. This analysis will ensure that the work completed is cost effective and of value to all partners.

Integrated data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan. Iowa sees the need for clear authority, management and responsibility to remain within the agencies running specific programs. Each agency needs the flexibility to conduct analysis, evaluate data, engage service providers and prepare data for internal and state uses, as well as meet their unique reporting requirements of their corresponding federal agencies. As such, the strategy for data integration was to build upon the design from Iowa Workforce Development, a central data warehouse which established a common intake of the participant's individual record that could be pulled as needed by each core partner. Each agency's case management system could then build upon the common data program specific information. The data from these case management systems necessary for reporting would then be merged and matched for analysis, evaluation and reporting on the WIOA program as a whole, through IWD.

iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and

implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.

State Board to Assist Governor in Aligning Technology

The state board will be the catalyst as it acts to advocate, convene and recommend processes and plans to move WIOA forward. This will be done via work groups and standing committees. A particular requirement of a new standing committee will be to “serve as an administrator to collect and manage workforce and talent development information” on behalf of the state board. An accessible data collection effort will streamline data collection processes, increase efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aid in accurate performance measurement to help improve decision-making. The state will work to minimize the participatory burden to an accessible system through the creation and implementation of a common intake and reporting system among Core Partners and relevant agencies. A robust policy will be adopted to ease transitions within and across systems and programs using a referral process that allows for direct connection by and between key agency staff, and holds agencies accountable for assisting workers in achieving success and making it easier for jobseekers to navigate the system.

iv. Describe the State’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

Iowa’s Development and Production of Required Reports

The data tracking system in Iowa is extremely valuable to the efforts to improve system performance. Because the state provides a comprehensive tracking system for its programs, the network of One-Stop Centers is supported by coordinated data tracking. The comprehensive reports and query capabilities provided by this system are essential to program analysis at both the state and local levels, leading to data-driven decisions that improve quality and efficiency.

An effective performance management and accountability system depends upon several important factors:

- Clearly defined performance goals and measures;
- A data tracking system that provides timely and accurate information, which can be queried or reported in formats that permit close analysis;
- An on-going evaluation process that not only reviews the current level of performance, but also includes historical and projected performance;
- Flexible program policies that allow rapid adjustment to issues of economic and workforce impact; and
- A system of incentive and sanctions.

The State of Iowa has these elements in place for performance accountability of the workforce system. The primary goals featured in the system are the mandated program goals for WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser). While some of these measures (placement rates and earnings at placement) are elevated to an enterprise-wide or broader system level for purposes of gubernatorial

reports or the Results Iowa website, there are no additional state-established goals for the employment and training system. Regional boards also have the option of establishing additional goals for their workforce areas. In practicality, extensive statutory program goals and reporting requirements that exist in the system mitigates local areas with limited resources to establish any additional goals, however. For this reason, Iowa welcomes federal initiatives to establish measures that are most representative of system success.

On-going evaluation and analysis of performance achievement occurs at federal, state and local levels. The ETA Regional Office provides a quarterly assessment of performance and expenditure levels of the ten states in the region. This information is used for comparative and analytical purposes, and is shared with local service providers. At the state level, regional representatives compile data on each region, to include enrollment levels, expenditure rates, and performance achievement. This information is shared with local boards and service providers. Locally, RWIBs routinely receive and analyze performance and enrollment data as part of their oversight responsibilities.

The Partners will collaborate to develop common performance indicators to ensure:

- Federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based, labor market driven, and accountable to participants and taxpayers.
- Performance will be transparent and accountable to the communities and regions served.
- Data entry staff are trained and understand the importance of data validation, data collection processes, and the importance of accurate reporting.
- Compliance with applicable federal standards.
- Compliance with applicable Partner confidentiality obligations.

The WIOA performance accountability measures in Section 116 will be used to assess the effectiveness of Adult Education statewide and ensuring continuous improvement in the service delivery system. In an effort to increase awareness, accuracy, and transparency, performance reports will be published for each region. These reports allow the state and regions to track and monitor performance regularly. Programs are assessed on their fiscal management, program implementation - including enrollment and performance benchmark attainment, and data management. Additional assessment may include partnership, collaboration, and career pathway efforts.

The core partners will target programs for technical assistance technical assistance that fail to meet the state performance benchmarks. Failure to meet the performance benchmarks for two consecutive years could result in the reduction or elimination of funding.

The participant service account will include the Participant Information Record Layout (PIRL) distributed by DOL. Each partner had the opportunity to submit feedback to the USDOL in September. The PIRL was reviewed members of each core agency. Each core partner will need to create a link to the participant service account. The unique PIRL Identifier will be the common shared data element used to link participants. The participant service account will populate each of the agency specific databases.

Next decisions for the PIRL include whether the participant, staff, or an agency batch process will complete specific data elements. Identification of allowable locations needs determined. IWD secured funding for the initial project to move forward. A project plan and scope need to be developed with a clear timeframe. Sustainable costs are not included. Modifications to agency specific applications are also not included.

A comprehensive list of data elements dependent on partners will be compiled to help develop the state data sharing MOU. This state level template will focus on measures and reporting requirements to be used for regional MOUs. The participant service account will store information about the participant's post program success and Unemployment Insurance Wage record data. Reporting performance outcomes, the details of who, when, and how this information is to be shared are yet to be determined. The Participant Profile application includes identity authentication steps as a means to verify individuals and maintain privacy.

Another sub-group for Educational Training Provider List (ETPL) has also been meeting and is working on the draft policy surrounding the ETPL process for interested, qualified training providers.

Purpose of the Project

- Implement new performance accountability measures
- Refine the Educational Training Provider application and approval process
- Develop recommendations for additional measures
- Decide on a system for use as the core partner data base registration and data reporting management system.

Scope of the Project

- Review new performance measures and identify potential issues, including recording and reporting information
- Analyze current state of reporting requirements, identify gaps, efficiency opportunities needed indicators of performance
- Develop a matrix of required data and reporting requirements and coordinate with State leadership to identify additional shared performance requirements across agencies
- Develop IT scope of work guidelines for data sharing to successfully implement new data and reporting requirements, including the integration of additional program data (i.e.
- apprenticeship data, iJAG data, STEM credential data, etc.) into longitudinal data coordination efforts
- Make recommendations regarding effective dissemination of performance data to stakeholders, the public, workforce customers, and program managers
- Coordinate with NGA Talent Pipeline team
- Negotiate levels of performance/adjustment factors
- Delivery Plan
- Provide data to be shared by Core Partners to go into MOU
- State data dictionary

- Issue List
- Sub-group for ETP will
- Sub-group for Profile will
- An intake system to collect participant data
- A reporting mechanism for reporting state performance to the feds which is viewable by all core partners.

In order to meet the requirements of WIOA for cooperation between the programs of Workforce Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Department of Education common portal, referred to as the “Participant Profile,” collects common demographical information and assigns a state wide Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) number. The profile uses OpenID to permit users to use their personal email address and password. This portal is owned by Iowa Workforce Development and is currently scheduled to receive upgrades which will make agency cross-use more efficient, reliable and secure.

The participant may create their own profile or one may be created by a staff member. The ID of the participant can be verified through DOT records or through Experian. Each individual program will have additional information specific to that program but will use common information, along with the PIRL number, from the profile.

The staff will have a dashboard with the status of each program by participant. Only the staff authorized for each program will have the ability to access details for each program.

Iowa’s Common Data-Collection and Reporting Process

Iowa’s common data-collection and reporting processes are used for all programs and activities provided by workforce investment funds at Iowa’s One-Stop Centers. Iowa’s Integrated Service Delivery system uses a common job-seeker registration and enrollment process that also uses the same computer software that generates the participant data base. IWorks is Iowa’s data management system.

IWorks is web-enabled, requires a secure-password access and has been customized to meet Iowa’s case management and reporting system needs. Each job seeker who comes to a One-Stop Center is asked to enter their specific demographic information, which begins their registration. This partial registration information is then completed and verified by Center staff to ensure complete data entry and program enrollment.

IWorks is the common data-collection process for the following programs:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- Wagner-Peyser Act
- Veterans Employment Training programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- PROMISE JOBS
- Food Assistance Employment & Training
- Iowa’s State Performance Accountability System

Iowa Workforce Development, Adult Education and Family Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation will adopt joint performance reporting requirements as outlined in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 116 providing that State joint performance measures and reporting requirements under authority of the Secretary of Labor and Education. Joint performance measures for WIOA shall consist of six (6) customer outcomes specific to core indicators of performance.

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

B. Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

IVRS has for the past four consecutive years exceeded the Federal Employment Standards. The review of data and the strategic plan is being revised to reflect the new opportunities provided by WIOA. New strategies are specifically being addressed in the areas of youth engagement, business services and outreach to individuals in segregated settings.

When evaluating the new performance measures as required under WIOA, IVRS went back and reviewed data from 2014. This serves as a baseline for employment outcome and wage data being collected through a project with IWD. The baseline shows 50.99% of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program, and that the same figure is obtained when considering the fourth quarter measure. This becomes the baseline for IVRS and will be the goal for the FFY 17 until we have more current data and trend information to determine a higher target goal.

On-going evaluation and analysis of performance achievement occurs at federal, state and local levels. The ETA Regional Office provides a quarterly assessment of performance and expenditure levels of the ten states in the region. This information is used for comparative and analytical purposes, and is shared with local service providers. At the

state level, regional representatives compile data on each region, to include enrollment levels, expenditure rates, and performance achievement. This information is shared with local boards and service providers. Locally, RWIBs routinely receive and analyze performance and enrollment data as part of their oversight responsibilities.

An effective performance management and accountability system depends upon several important factors:

- Clearly defined performance goals and measures;
- A data tracking system that provides timely and accurate information, which can be queried or reported in formats that permit close analysis;
- An on-going evaluation process that not only reviews the current level of performance, but also includes historical and projected performance;
- Flexible program policies that allow rapid adjustment to issues of economic and workforce impact; and
- A system of incentive and sanctions.

The State of Iowa has these elements in place for performance accountability of the workforce system. The primary goals featured in the system are the mandated program goals for WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser). While some of these measures (placement rates and earnings at placement) are elevated to an enterprise-wide or broader system level for purposes of gubernatorial reports or the Results Iowa website, there are no additional state-established goals for the employment and training system. Regional boards also have the option of establishing additional goals for their workforce areas. In practicality, extensive statutory program goals and reporting requirements that exist in the system mitigates local areas with limited resources to establish any additional goals, however. For this reason, Iowa welcomes federal initiatives to establish measures that are most representative of system success.

The data tracking system in Iowa is extremely valuable to the efforts to improve system performance. Because the state provides a comprehensive tracking system for its programs, the network of One-Stop Centers is supported by coordinated data tracking. The comprehensive reports and query capabilities provided by this system are essential to program analysis at both the state and local levels, leading to data-driven decisions that improve system quality and efficiency.

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Labor supply and demand data was analyzed in order to determine the impact from the education and training provided to participants in Title II and co-enrolled as participants

in Iowa's skilled worker pipeline. By utilizing graduate data from the training providers for the supply, and Iowa's 2012 to 2022 Long-Term Occupational Projections for the demand, occupation-specific data was analyzed. This data by occupation includes:

- Type of award (certificate, diploma or degree)
- Program of study
- Projected job openings (both replacement and new)
- Wages
- Education/Training
- Experience
- Skills
- Projected job growth

The occupations were then aggregated into occupational categories for analysis, where necessary. The primary source for the supply of education awards was obtained from data housed within the Management Information System (MIS) at the Iowa Department of Education. For each training program offered by Iowa's community college, the corresponding classification of instructional programs (CIP) was used to track area of study. Occupational projections were used as the primary source for the demand representation. Future occupational demand was defined using the annual growth rate of Long-Term (2012-2022) Iowa Occupational Projections as produced by Iowa Workforce Development. These projections use the standard occupational classification (SOC) system and can be categorized at different levels (two-, three-, five-, and six-digit), where moving from a lower to higher level indicates more disaggregation in the occupational structure.

By linking occupations (SOC codes) to education programs (CIP codes) a crosswalk is created, such as the one available from the National Crosswalk Center®. Additionally, the National Career Clusters® Framework links every CIP code to one of the 16 career clusters, and the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE), assigned one of the 79 career pathways (where each pathway was associated to a unique career cluster) to each of the SOC Codes. While there might be some discrepancies this data is being used to determine the match between educational training needs and occupational demand. With the crosswalk, analysis can be done for each of the occupational categories with the corresponding projected employment demand. Levels for determining high/low wage and high/low demand are based on an average Iowa occupational growth rate for all occupations of 1.3 percent and on the 2013 Iowa average annual salary of \$40,240. Regionally and statewide this process can help determine the effectiveness of sector partnerships, career pathway development and programs related to workforce delivery services.

C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Use of UI Wage Record Data

Unemployment insurance wage record data has and will continue to be matched to assist program data collection for students, apprenticeships, training participants, and Promise Job participants for purposes of matching it to employment, wages, and industry. Individual contracts and data sharing agreements are established between IWD and training providers. In return, IWD will provide an aggregate analysis of how their students fared economically after they left their program using wage records.

Iowa Workforce Development has an internal-earnings transfer procedure, and contracts with other national agencies in order to use quarterly wage information to measure progress for state and local performance measures. Each quarter, earnings from Iowa employers are uploaded, and the state system performs the job match by way of Social Security Number matches. Iowa also has a contract with the state of Maryland's administration of the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) and with U.S. Department of Labor's Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and (WRIS2), which provides earnings data for out-of-state individuals who participated in Iowa's workforce programs. These two systems also provide information on individuals who, as a result of our services, obtain employment with the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Postal Service, and federal jobs, in general. All earnings data is secured through multiple, fire-walled systems, and access is granted only to individuals with a legitimate business need. By participating in the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS/WRIS2), Iowa has a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of the workforce delivery programs, and is able to report more comprehensive outcomes against performance measures.

D. Privacy Safeguards

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

The usage of TopsEnterprise (TE®), the information management system of Iowa's adult education and literacy, is in line with FERPA regulations and monitored on an ongoing basis to assure alignment. Users of TE® must annually sign and submit a Personal Confidentiality Statement which serves to safeguard personally identifiable information. Iowa's adult education and literacy (AEL) also requires each local program to sign an assurance as a part of the funding application indicating adherence to outlined technology requirements. The technology requirements describe the minimum level of security required by local programs. AEL participants have the ability to opt-out of information sharing through a Release of Information form. Students who refuse are not shared for any purpose including federal/state match. WIOA partners will be included in the release statement allowing students to approve the release of their data to the central repository. Likewise, a data sharing MOU will be established between the key individuals responsible for the central data warehouse.

Iowa Workforce Development utilizes data sharing agreements with the schools, agencies and training providers. The entities permit us social security numbers through Globalscape, a secured FTP site provided by IT. The social security numbers are then

matched to unemployment insurance records. IWD reports findings in aggregate and reports if we have three or more participants. If we don't have at least three that information is suppressed. This is done so that you can't identify any individual specifically.

7. Priority of Service for Veterans

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Priority of Service for Veterans

Iowa Workforce Development will provide all qualified Veterans with priority of service.

In order to maximize and provide priority of services to Veterans, Veterans will be able to register at all Iowa Workforce Development Center locations. Registration is also available on-line 24/7 through www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov, or any of the regional websites. Iowa complies with final regulations which state recipients of USDOL funds for qualified job training programs are subject to the priority of service regulations, and are required by law to provide priority of service to Veterans and eligible spouses. If the SBE eligible Veteran's needs cannot be met at the point of intake (as determined by core service staff) or if the eligible Veteran requests, they will be referred to the DVOP or appropriate service provider for assistance.

The Iowa Director for Veterans Employment and Training (DVET) and/or his designee (ADVET), has a standing invitation to address district management at their monthly meeting to describe expectations of the Jobs for Veterans Act, and to review program performance. The state has followed-up by requiring that each SWA describe in their local customer service plan how they will ensure priority of service is provided in their programs. IWD Management staff will consult with local partners on how to implement priority of service, and will be monitoring compliance with the established procedure.

Regional Workforce Development Boards (RWDBs) are to ensure One-Stop Operators and service providers recruit individuals in the priority of service categories and develop and provide appropriate services to meet those populations' needs. Local areas must establish written policies and procedures to ensure priority for the populations described in this guidance for participants served in the WIOA Adult program for eligibility determinations beginning on July 1, 2015. Additionally, based on local policy, the Boards may:

- Establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals; and
- Choose to provide individualized career and training services to adults whose income is above the WIOA income guidelines requirement but below the Board-established self-sufficiency wage level.

Each region submits their plan for providing priority of service to Veterans. Each plan is reviewed by the state liaisons to the Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB). The state liaisons work with the DVET to develop expectations that can be enforced locally. Priority of service is monitored in the following manner:

- Local management staff audits job orders and other services;
- Local management will take corrective action on Veteran customer complaints; and
- Local office management conducts a random review of initial Veteran applications for proper qualification, quality of service provided, and to ensure that the appropriate service was provided.

Corrective action, in the form of continuing education and positive feedback is provided by the DVOP. If problems persist, local management, the Division Administrator and the DVET will be consulted.

Veterans will be made aware of their priority of service entitlement and about the services provided by DVOP staff to SBE eligible Veterans, not only through outreach activities, but through an information and self-assessment pamphlet available both in paper form and on the web. The pamphlet will describe for the Veteran the various services they may receive, their priority of service, and will provide a simple mechanism for the Veteran (and staff) to determine if career services are needed. It is expected that this method will help avoid oversight of Veterans in need of special services. In addition, large colorful posters featuring local Veterans were developed with non-JVSG funds and distributed to all IWD and partner locations asking, “Are You the Spouse of a Veteran?” and explaining priority of service for those individuals.

“The Jobs for Veterans Act (PL 107-288) provides an emphasis on serving veterans by establishing a priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor, including Wagner-Peyser, WIOA and other job training programs offered through competitive grants. Priority of Service is the right of an eligible “Covered Person” to be given priority of service over an eligible non-covered person for the receipt of employment, training and placement services, notwithstanding other provisions of the law.

“Covered Persons take precedence over non-covered persons in obtaining services and shall receive access to services and resources earlier in time than a non-covered person. If services or resources are limited, the Covered Person receives access instead of or before the non-covered person. Procedures or policies that restrict a veteran’s access to WIOA or WP services, even if such restrictions are intended to provide the veteran with specialized services, are contrary to the priority of service requirements.

“20 CFR Part 1010 and 38 U.S.C. 4215, Section 4215(a)(1) defines “Covered Persons” to mean veterans and the spouses “of any of the following:

- a. any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;

b. any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:

i. Missing in action;

ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or

iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power; or

iv. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs or any veteran who died while such a disability was in existence.”

“Covered Persons must have served at least one day in the active military, naval or air service, and were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable as specified in 38 U.S.C 101(2). Active service includes full-time Federal service in the National Guard or a Reserve component. It does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes, nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel mobilized by the State rather than federal authorities. “Spouses of military personnel killed in the line of duty do not currently qualify for priority of service.

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“As defined in USC 101, the term “surviving spouse” means a person of the opposite sex who was the wife or husband of a veteran at the time of the veteran’s death, and who lived with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of the veteran’s death (except where there was a separation which was due to the misconduct of, or procured by, the veteran without the fault of the spouse) and who has not remarried or (in cases not involving remarriage) has not since the death of the veteran, and after September 19, 1962, lived with another person and held himself or herself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person.

“The Jobs for Veterans Act provides priority service only to veterans or eligible spouses who meet the program’s eligibility requirements.

Proposed rule 680.650 re-affirms that veterans continue to receive priority of service in ALL DOL-funded training programs but that a “veteran must still meet each program’s eligibility criteria.” Thus for WIOA Title I Adult services, the program’s eligibility and priority considerations must be made first, and then veteran’s priority applied.

Local areas must give priority of service to participants that fall into one of the below priority categories (Proposed § 679.560(b)(21)):

Recipients of Public Assistance

Other low-income individuals. The term “low income individuals” is defined in WIOA Law—Definitions; Section 3(36) means an individual who:

- Receives, or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, or state or local based public assistance program; or
- Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current U.S.DOL 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines or
- Is a homeless individual, or
- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirements above, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.

Individuals Who are Basic Skills Deficient

The term “basic skills deficient” is defined in Section 3(5) to mean a youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. Iowa Workforce Development(IWD) is providing guidance for making this determination by defining it as an individual who meets ANY ONE of the following:

Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education;
or

- Scores below 9.0 grade level (8.9 or below) on the TABE; CASAS or other allowable assessments as per National Reporting System (NRS) developed by the U.S. Department of Education’s Division of Adult Education and Literacy or
- Is enrolled in Title II adult education (including enrolled for ESL); or
- Has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn’t enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation.

To ensure that local staff is aware of their responsibilities to provide priority of service, Veteran staff and management will train local non-vet staff and service delivery partners to enhance their knowledge of Veterans’ employment and training needs. As well, the state has, and will continue to issue, field information memos to clarify these responsibilities. All such memos have been reviewed by the DVET.

DAS, IVRS, IWD, Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA office of Vocational Rehabilitation developed a new state training program for veterans with service connected disabilities. This allows a qualified veteran who successfully completes a state work experience program the opportunity to be directly hired into the position and bypass merit hiring. Additionally, the state of Iowa has established policies regarding priority of service for veterans. Veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers as defined in the statute and regulations, are eligible for priority of service. For the purposes of implementing priority of service, the Final Rule requires that program operators use the broad definition of veteran found in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Under this definition, the term “veteran” means a person who served at least one day in the active

military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Active service includes full-time Federal service in the National Guard or a Reserve component. This definition of “active service” does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes (i.e., that which often is referred to as “weekend” or “annual” training), nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel who are mobilized by State rather than Federal

Iowa Jobs State Veterans Program Plan

The Jobs for Veterans’ State Grants (JVSG) creates opportunities for all eligible veterans and eligible spouses to obtain meaningful and successful careers through provision of resources and expertise that maximize employment opportunities and protect veterans’ employment rights. Services provided by the Veteran Representative include comprehensive assessments, development of an Individual Employment Plan, career counseling, and referrals to other veteran and community organizations as needed. The Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) is a member of the business services team. The LVER promotes the hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups; facilitates employer training, plans and participates in career fairs and conducts job development with employers.

Iowa has an effective business services program across the state. There are Business Services Teams located in each of the 15 Regions who coordinate efforts with DVOP staff to contact current and prospective employers, Federal contractors and subcontractors, and others to promote Veterans -SBE, aged 18-24, and non-SBE - as excellent job candidates and employees.

In addition, partners in the one-stops are utilized to train Veterans in identifying job skills as well as the “soft skills” related to job seeking and job retention. Assessment services are used to identify the skills, knowledge, abilities and preferences of Veterans so that the best possible job match can be made initially. Career exploration services are offered so that Veterans have a good knowledge of available jobs and specific information about occupations. Veterans are offered assistance in understanding the skills needed to function in the work place, and help in understanding how job and career advancement can be accomplished with an employer.

Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment

IWD Management will serve the role of educators to the one-stop operators, their partners and the Regional Workforce Development Board members. They will train and educate on:

- The identification of Veteran under Title 38 of the U.S.C;
- Criteria for the identification of needs for referral for career services;
- Veterans’ preference requirements and methodologies;
- The difference between Priority of Service and Veterans’ Preference, and;
- Veterans’ integration policy as determined by Agency leadership.

Partners such as WIOA partners, PROMISE JOBS/TANF, Trade Act, and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services will also identify Veteran customers at their points of contact or entry, which may or may not be collocated with IWD Veteran staff at the one-stop. Those Veteran customers identified as having a significant barrier to employment as defined by USDOL, VETS, or age 18-24, will be referred to the DVOP for additional services. Veterans will be co-enrolled with PROMISE JOBS if they are receiving Family Investment Program (TANF) assistance and subject to the terms of a Family Investment Agreement (FIA), WIOA, or Trade Act if they are a dislocated worker. Veteran program management monitors case records monthly and quarterly report data to ensure compliance, address issues, quantify progress, and celebrate success with DVOP staff.

The state will ensure adherence to the legislative requirements for Veteran's staff. This includes, but is not limited to, employing only Veterans to fill the DVOP positions with a preference towards hiring disabled Veterans. Each of these staff is trained in their new roles and responsibilities under the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002. The DVOP, and local Wagner-Peyser management, work closely with all partners to ensure the mandatory WIOA partners provide Veteran's priority of service.

Iowa has focused staff resources on the utilization of DVOP Specialists, rather than LVERs, for a number of years. We believe it is a better investment of funds to ensure case management is offered to SBE Veterans and those aged 18-24 in accordance with VPLs 01-14, 03-14 and 04-14. All non-Vet staff is assigned to serve Veterans without an SBE, and we expect our non-JVSG funded BSRs to promote Veterans to our business customers. Iowa also elected to eliminate the Veterans Program Coordinator position, and now has a fulltime program manager to provide oversight, monitoring and training. With the deployment of Iowa Governor Terry Branstad's "Home Base Iowa" initiative to encourage military personnel to make our state their home, we hired one LVER to conduct outreach to employers to assist Veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars, job search workshops, and facilitating employment, training and placement services.

Once identified either by self-assessment, core service staff, or partner staff, that the individual is a Veteran who is eligible for and could benefit from DVOP services, that staff would refer the Veteran job seeker to the DVOP. In offices without a full time DVOP, local management will be responsible for ensuring there is an efficient means of referral that ensures no Veteran eligible for and requiring career services goes without the appropriate service.

The DVOP will facilitate career services by working with the eligible Veteran to develop a written action plan to resolve barriers to employment (i.e. DVOP will refer for appointment with local county Veteran affairs to resolve financial issues and Veteran will follow through by making appointment and going to receive services).

Iowa has instituted an Integrated System of service that includes all of the partners in the Workforce Center, "All Means All." The system consists of a Membership Team, Skills Development Team and Business Services Team. All DVOP Specialists will be assigned to the Skills Development Team, as this complies with their roles and responsibilities under Title 38. As a member of the Skills Development Team, they will be referred any Veteran their coworkers have identified as eligible for DVOP services because of age

(18-24) or who has a significant barrier to employment and needs career services. While working in Skills, they will assist only Veterans who meet the criteria outlined in VPLs 01-14, 03-14 and 04-14; all other Veterans will be served by the non-JVSG staff.

The DVOP will locate, build and maintain good working relationships with Federal agencies (VA), state agencies (Health & Welfare, Education), community based organizations, Veterans and others that may be able to provide services to eligible Veterans age 18-24 or with a significant barrier to employment.

The DVOP staff in Iowa has maintained an excellent working relationship with their local VA VR & E staff. The procedure followed in serving Chapter 31 Vets is in accordance with VA/DOL Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) dated December 2008.

Iowa has established the position of Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) who is out stationed on a part-time basis at the VR&E Regional office. The position is filled by a DVOP specialist.

DVOPs receive referrals from the VR&E counselor through the ISC and are at that time informed of the Veteran's employment goal, barriers to employment and any other significant information.

Upon referral, the DVOP immediately conducts an interview to further assess the Veteran's situation. The DVOP will develop a mutually agreed upon, individualized case management plan to assist the Veteran while in receipt of employment services.

The DVOP will provide resume assistance, interviewing techniques, job leads and establish job development referrals with employers. The DVOP will also make referrals to assist with any special needs the Veteran may have. The DVOP maintains a minimum of weekly contact with the Chapter 31 Veteran and each month submits the results of the month's activities to the VR&E counselor and the ISC.

Iowa Workforce Development has partnered with the state DOL/ETA Office of Apprenticeship and hosts the following web site:
<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/apprenticeship/>. This web site has been recognized as the premier Apprenticeship web portal in the nation. DVOP staff routinely use this site to place Veterans in training.

The Iowa Department of Education works closely with the DVOP Specialists to disseminate information on Chapter 31 GI Bill programs, the Troops to Teachers program and various other educational programs to provide educational opportunities for our Veterans.

DVOP staff work closely with TANF - Employment and Training program (Referred to in Iowa as PROMISE JOBS) to provide job placement and referral assistance to Veterans who are TANF cash recipients. (Referred to in Iowa as the Family Investment Program).

Though Iowa has no active duty military installations or medical facilities in the state, DVOP staff maintains a close working relationship with the Iowa National Guard. This provides a strong linkage and referral system between all returning National Guard Veterans and the one-stop center.

Iowa Workforce Development maintains a Veterans Benefits and Services book that lists Federal, State, and Local Veteran benefits and services. Several agencies have partnered in contributing to this book, to include USDOL Office of Apprenticeship, Iowa Department of Education, both state and county Department of Veteran Affairs and others. This book is very well received and serves to both inform Veterans and to provide them with the knowledge to access Veteran services provided IWD. This book is distributed to partners, agencies and civic organizations across the state by the DVOPs, Division Administrator, Iowa National Guard, Iowa Department of Veteran's Affairs, ESGR personnel and volunteers, and USDOL VETS staff.

Home Base Iowa

Another initiative of Iowa Governor Branstad is "Home Base Iowa," which was signed into law on Memorial Day, 2014. This legislation provides the following benefits to Iowa Veterans, as well as Transitioning Service Members looking to make this state their home:

- Fully exempts military pensions from state income tax, and includes surviving spouses in this exemption;
- Special license plate fees waived for those eligible for veteran-related specialty plates (Bronze Star, Disabled Veteran, Ex POW, Gold Star, Iowa National Guard, Legion of Merit, Medal of Honor, Pearl Harbor Veteran, Purple Heart, Retired by branch, Air Force Cross Medal, Airman's Medal, Navy Cross, Service Cross Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Medal, Soldier's Medal, Silver Star Medal, Veteran;)
- Allows private employers to give preference in hiring and promotion to veterans and surviving spouses of military personnel who died either while on active duty, or as a result of such service;
- Increases funding and eligibility for Military Homeownership Assistance Program;
- Requires licensing boards to adopt rules giving credit for military training and experience, as well as draft proposals allowing license reciprocity for military spouses; and
- Higher education institutions must set academic credit standards for military experience.

Another component of Home Base Iowa is member businesses and communities. The Home Base Iowa Communities initiative designates communities as centers of opportunity for military veterans and further highlights Iowa's statewide commitment to welcoming veterans to the state. Standards to become a Home Base Iowa community include:

- Ten percent of the businesses in the community agree to pledge to hire a specific number of veterans, post their jobs with IWD, and become a member of Skilled Iowa;
- The community develops its own welcome/incentive package for veterans;
- The community prominently displays the Home Base Iowa Community designation; and

- The community obtains a resolution of support from the appropriate local governing body.

Iowa currently has 31 Home Base Iowa communities. For more information, see www.homebaseiowa.org. This website also provides information on job opportunities in Iowa through the .jobs microsite for Veterans, veteran-friendly employers and communities, resources for veterans, Home Base Iowa employers, and more.

Iowa was also the first state to partner with Hilton Worldwide to offer no-cost accommodations to military personnel. The Hilton Honors hotel stays can be used to pursue job opportunities in any industry - and can be used to support job interviews, skills training, housing searches for newly employed Iowans, and other job-seeking activities within the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii. Iowa is making points available to Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, Spouse, National Guard and Reserve members, and anyone meeting the Wagner-Peyser definition of a Veteran. Case management is not a requirement. Iowa is currently the largest user of this benefit.

Performance Incentive Awards

The Performance Incentive Award Program will be in accordance with VPL 02-07. The total amount of the funds available for performance awards and incentives will be one percent of the total award for Veterans programs. The Performance Awards and Incentives program will recognize those regions that excel in providing services to Veterans. Regions selected for awards will have demonstrated their excellence of service to Veterans or in support of Veterans programs. Awards will not be distributed in cash. The value of the awards will be significant enough to encourage regions to develop better approaches to delivering services to Veterans. The focus of the awards will be on improving the services to Veterans and strategies for the delivery of services, but not to the exclusion of non-Veterans.

The presentation of the awards will be in a venue that will highlight services to Veterans. The Director of Iowa Workforce Development has made a commitment to present the awards at the annual Veterans Conference during the third quarter of each year. Making the presentations in this manner will again emphasize Iowa's effort to improve services and highlight the contribution staff makes to improve the lives of Veterans across Iowa.

8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

The State of Iowa is committed to providing programs and services in a readily accessible format and delivery method to any individual who is seeking services from the workforce system. Accessibility as referenced throughout this plan refers to the direct and indirect ideas, actions, philosophies and physical and emotional supports used by an individual or employer to support employment for ALL Iowans. The Partners have legal obligations under federal and state anti-discrimination laws when providing workforce services. Federal and state antidiscrimination laws prohibit discrimination in the provision of services on the basis of an individual's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age, or disability. Meeting the Partners' legal obligations under federal and state antidiscrimination laws must be a focus when the Partners develop and implement policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices with respect to increasing and maximizing access to workforce services and when assessing the physical and programmatic access of one-stop system partners, physical office spaces, websites, etc.

Individuals with disabilities constitute a population that has traditionally been underserved or unserved by the workforce development system. The Partners recognize that state and federal anti-discrimination laws impose legal obligations with respect to workforce services delivery to individuals with disabilities. Further, WIOA singles out individuals with disabilities as a group with a barrier to employment that the Partners must target for increased and maximized access to workforce services. As such, the Partners will develop policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices to create maximized physical and programmatic access and opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Implementation of policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices to increase and maximize physical and programmatic access for individuals with disabilities must be an element of One-Stop Certification that is strictly applied. In developing the Unified State Plan, Iowa has incorporated several measures which will assist in ensuring that ALL Iowans have equal opportunities within the workforce delivery system and throughout the workforce. Iowa has worked very closely with and has relied upon the expertise provided by the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDOB). As core partners, IVRS and IDOB has provided ongoing technical assistance and support regarding development of policies, procedures, and system design and evaluation protocols to ensure that ALL Iowans have full and welcoming access. The Iowa Department for the Blind will also be utilized to consider all form of accessibility impacting field of vision. Their Assistive Technology services will ensure accommodations are in place to support access for needed services and supports for all Iowans.

Additionally, key staff and WIOA work group implementers have participated in LEAD Center Webinars regarding serving persons with disabilities under WIOA and have infused the promising practices and policies throughout the vision and goals and the entirety of the Unified State Plan. The one-stop operations and system design group is developing effective policies, plans and procedures that will be incorporated into the One-Stop Center operations. In utilizing the reference guide as a foundation on which to design supportive policies, it is important to note that until such time as the Department of Labor announces new regulations pursuant to WIOA Section 188, the current Section

188 regulations cited herein are used. Section 188 regulatory requirements are organized into three Sections:

- Providing Universal Access to Programs and Activities
- Ensuring Equal Opportunity
- Obligation to Ensure Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities
- Implementing Universal Access and Equal Opportunity through the designation of a Qualified Equal Opportunity Officer

9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners.

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

Accessibility

The one-stop delivery system will address accessibility for Individuals who are English language learners by identifying and attempting to bridge the barriers faced in accessing and maintaining usage of the services provided by core partners. Barriers to obtaining and maintaining services from core partners include but are not limited to transportation, awareness and understanding of services, language barriers, and familiarity with culture and civic education. The obstacles faced by English language learners when accessing the one-stop delivery system can be minimized by implementing the following:

- Creating an inclusive environment for Iowa's one-stop system through deliberate diversity training;
- Provide culturally relevant and translated materials throughout the one-stop system as needed, driven by participant needs;
- Collaboration with additional partners who can assist with the barriers;
- Interweaving civic education in training offered to core partners and one-stop system staff;
- Develop a cadre of diversity trainers and translators for core partner agencies; and
- Incorporate accessibility for English language learners in the one-stop system certification process to address local policies relevant to the needs of English language learners.

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Coordination

Iowa began planning efforts for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) in early 2015 with the formation of a WIOA Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was appointed by the Governor's Office in partnership with Iowa Workforce Development. The Steering Committee included representatives from all of the Core Partner programs, the Governor's Office, Iowa Workforce Development and other Key Program staff. This group was tasked with overseeing WIOA planning efforts in Iowa. The steering committee developed a strategy to ensure effective communications, created a planning timeline, established additional work groups and provided oversight for Iowa's WIOA planning and implementation efforts. Partners were able to come together to resolve conflicts, improve processes and to meet project goals. The following workgroups were formed to carry out state planning efforts:

- Communication and Governance
- Statewide Services Mapping
- Performance Accountability and Data Sharing
- Financial
- Career Pathways and Industry Partnerships
- Planning, Implementation and Policy
- One-Stop Operations and System Design
- Youth Services

In addition to the work groups, there were several special committees established to review and make recommendations regarding topics such as universal definitions, common intake and referral processes, serving populations with barriers to employment, and accessibility.

V. Common Assurances (for all core programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs,

required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes

5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes

6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes

7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes

8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes

9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; Yes

10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Yes

11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and Yes

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. Yes

VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

a. Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities General Requirements

1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.

Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

Iowa has traditionally had 15 workforce development regions. Each of Iowa's 15 historic regions was initially designated as a local workforce development area under WIOA section 160(b)(2). Each of Iowa's 15 local workforce development areas is aligned; thus, under WIOA section 106(2)(A), each of Iowa's 15 local workforce development areas also constitutes a workforce development region.

Iowa's 15 Workforce Development Boards (WDB) are as follows.

Local Area/Region 1:

Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

Local Area/Region 2:

Cerro Gordo, Franklin, Floyd, Mitchell, Worth, Winnebago, and Hancock counties.

Local Area/Region 3/4:

Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, and Sioux counties.

Local Area/Region 5:

Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster and Wright counties.

Local Area/Region 6:

Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek and Tama counties.

Local Area/Region 7:

Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Buchanan and Grundy counties.

Local Area/Region 8:

Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie and Sac counties.

Local Area/Region 9:

Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine and Scott counties.

Local Area/Region 10:

Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties.

Local Area/Region 11:

Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren counties.

Local Area/Region 12:

Cherokee, Ida, Monona, Plymouth and Woodbury counties.

Local Area/Region 13:

Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Page, Pottawattamie and Shelby counties.

Local Area/Region 14:

Adair, Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Montgomery, Ringgold, Taylor and Union counties.

Local Area/Region 15:

Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Van Buren and Wayne counties.

Local Area/Region 16:

Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties.

B. Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.

Iowa currently has 15 LWDAs designated pursuant to Iowa Code Section 84B.3, in accordance with the “Special Rule Regarding Designated Areas” at WIOA Section 189(i)(1). The 15 LWDAs date back to the Job Training Partnership Act under which States established “Service Delivery Areas” or SDAs. These SDAs were formed to align with service delivery in the State and, in Iowa, this resulted in areas that aligned generally with community college areas throughout the State. Subsequent workforce development legislation, first the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and, most recently, WIOA, allowed for existing service areas to continue to serve as LWDAs, with only minimal qualifying criteria. The U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) Region 5 has affirmed as recently as April 4, 2019 that Iowa qualifies for the exception provided by the “Special Rule Regarding Designated Areas” at WIOA Section 189(i)(1).

On November 8, 2017, the USDOL/ETA Region 5 issued a WIOA Implementation Compliance monitoring report which, among other things, specifically addressed the number of LWDAs in Iowa. Finding 1 of the monitoring report stated “the division of

limited WIOA funds among 15 service areas, particularly in a State that has large rural areas, is stretching the available dollars so thin that the local areas are unable to fund core WIOA functions, such as staff support for the required [local area boards].” As a result, USDOL/ETA Region 5 directed the State to establish WIOA-compliant LWDAs that are able to fulfill all of the required roles and functions of a LWDA.

In response to USDOL/ETA Region 5’s direction, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) convened on November 20, 2017 and created a standing Realignment Committee to make a recommendation with respect to LWDA realignment to ensure WIOA compliance. The Realignment Committee was comprised of representatives from all of the WIOA core partners, which include the Department of Education, Department of the Blind, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation and Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), SWDB members, legislators from both parties, community college representatives, and local workforce board members. The Realignment Committee held its first public meeting on December 13, 2017. IWD provided a detailed response to the monitoring report, including a Realignment Plan, to USDOL/ETA Region 5 on December 21, 2017.

Between December 2017 and February 2019, a total of 88 public meetings were held wherein the realignment process was discussed (five at SWDB, six Realignment Committee meetings, and 77 Chief Elected Official / Local Board meetings). These public meetings resulted in significant input to the Realignment Committee, including several recommendations regarding different LWDA configurations and numbers. In February 2019, the Realignment Committee arrived at its recommendation to reduce and realign Iowa’s LWDAs from 15 to six. The Realignment Committee created two different configurations consisting of six LWDAs, and presented these configurations to the SWDB on February 18, 2019. At this meeting, the SWDB adopted the recommendation of the Realignment Committee to reduce the number of LWDAs from 15 to six, and the SWDB selected one of the recommended configurations.

Following the SWDB realignment vote, eight of the existing local boards appealed the SWDB decision. On May 30, 2019, the SWDB convened to consider the appeals and vote on whether any changes would be made to its February 18, 2019 realignment decision. After reviewing all materials and listening to public comments, the SWDB had a full and open discussion and voted to affirm its realignment decision of February 18, 2019. On June 25, 2019, the Chief Lead Elected Officials from seven LWDAs appealed the SWDB’s realignment decision to the USDOL/ETA in accordance with WIOA section 106(b)(5) and its implementing regulations at 20 C.F.R. 679.290(a).

On December 19, 2019, the USDOL/ETA issued a decision that did not uphold Iowa’s redesignation of LWDAs. Specifically, the decision stated that Iowa must continue operating with the previous structure, consisting of 15 local areas, until the State:

1. Issues a local area designation policy and procedure publicly and transparently;
2. Issues a local area designation appeals policy in accordance with WIOA section 106(b)(5) and 20 C.F.R. 679.290; and

3. Seeks meaningful local input and consultation as the State implements a compliant local area designation policy and local area designation or reorganization.

Iowa has completed the first two steps above, and USDOL/ETA approved these modifications on December 20, 2019. With respect to number three, if key stakeholders desire to revisit LWDA redesignation, Iowa will make every effort to ensure the local area designation and appeals processes are well understood.

C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

A Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Chair or CLEO may appeal a designation decision to the SWDB within 30 calendar days of the date such designation is approved by the SWDB.

Appeals must include the following information:

- Intent or notice to appeal.
- Name and contact information of the LWDB Chair or CLEO filing the appeal.
- Provide justification for the appeal, including the reason for disagreement with the decision and a proposed alternative WIOA-compliant designation.
- Signature and date of the LWDB Chair or CLEO.

The appeal must be submitted electronically to the SWDB at:
WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov.

The SWDB will review the appeal, provide the appellant with the opportunity to be heard at the next regularly scheduled SWDB meeting, and make a ruling on the appeal within 30 calendar days of that meeting. The SWDB shall notify the appellant in writing of its decision.

In accordance with the WIOA regulations, in the event the SWDB denies the appeal or fails to issue a decision within 30 calendar days following the SWDB meeting that considered the appeal, the LWDB Chair or CLEO may request review of the SWDB's decision, or lack thereof, by the Secretary of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The request for review by the USDOL must be filed within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the written notification of the SWDB's denial or failure to issue a decision.

The appellant must establish in its request for review by the USDOL that the appellant was not afforded procedural rights under the appeal process set forth in this plan, or that the area meets the requirements for local designation as specified in WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or (3).

The request for review must be submitted by certified mail, with return receipt requested, to: Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DS 20210, Attention: ASET.

A copy of the request for review must be submitted to the SWDB at: WIOAgovernance@iwd.iowa.gov at the same time the appellant sends the request for review to the USDOL.

The appeals process described in this plan can also be found in Iowa's WIOA Administration and Governance Policy.

D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

State of Iowa Appeals Process Under WIOA section 121(h)(2)(E). 1. Applicability of Appeals Process.

1.1. This appeals process applies only to a one-stop partner administering a program described in 20 C.F.R. § 678.400 through 678.410 and 34 C.F.R. §§ 361.400 through 361.410. 1.2. If a one-stop partner wishes to appeal the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs, the one-stop partner must follow this appeals process.

2. Grounds for Appeal. A one-stop partner may only appeal the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs if the Governor's determination is inconsistent with: 2.1. The proportionate share requirements in 20 C.F.R. § 678.735(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.735(a); 2.2. The cost contribution limitations in 20 C.F.R. § 678.735(b) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.735(b); and/or 2.3. The cost contribution caps in 20 C.F.R. § 678.738.

3. Form of Appeal.

3.1. A one-stop partner's appeal must include all of the following: 3.2. The one-stop partner's name; 3.3. The name of individual who will serve as the one-stop partner's point of contact for the appeal as well as that individual's job title, employer, telephone number, email address, and mailing address; 3.4. The program described in 20 C.F.R. §§ 678.400 through 678.410 and 34 C.F.R. §§ 361.400 through 361.410 that the one-stop partner administers; and 3.5. The grounds for the appeal under Section 3 of this Process. 3.6. All supporting documentation for the appeal in the form of an Appendix, with table of contents and numbered pages.

4. Filing of Appeal. The one-stop partner must file an appeal with all of the Iowa core partners by hand-delivery or certified U.S. Mail at the following addresses: 4.1. Iowa Workforce Development — Legal1 1000 East Grand Avenue Des Moines, Iowa 50319 4.2. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services 510 East 12th Street Des Moines, Iowa 50319 4.3. Iowa Department of Education, Adult Education and Literacy 400 East 14th Street Des Moines, Iowa 50319 4.4. Iowa Department for the Blind 524 4th Street Des Moines, Iowa 50309

5. Deadline for Appeal.

5.1. A one-stop partner's appeal must be filed on or before the 21st day after the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs. If an appeal is not filed within 21 days after the Governor's determination, it is untimely and will not be considered. 5.2. For purposes of determining the deadline, Day 1 is the day after the date of the Governor's determination and Day 21 is the 21st day after the date of the Governor's determination. For example, if the Governor's determination occurred on December 1, any appeal must be filed on or before December 22. 5.3. An appeal is considered filed for purposes of calculating the deadline when it is received by all of the core partners, not when it is mailed. This means that an appealing one-stop partner must take into account the amount of time an appeal filed via certified U.S. mail will take to be received by all of the core partners. For example, an appeal that is mailed within 21 days of the Governor's determination but not received by all of the core partners until the 22nd day after the date of the Governor's determination is untimely and will not be considered. 5.4. If the 21st day after the Governor's determination falls on a weekend or state holiday, then the deadline to appeal will be the next regular workday.

6. Notice of Appeal. Within five days of filing an appeal, the appealing one-stop partner must send a copy of the appeal to all other local one-stop partners within the local workforce development area and/or region in-person, via email or U.S. Mail. 7. State Board Consideration.

7.1. Within five days of receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the Core Partners shall transmit the appeal to the Chairperson of the State Workforce Development Board and provide a copy of the Notice of Appeal to all non-appealing one-stop partners. 7.2. No one-stop partner is required to submit a response to an appeal. However, if a non-appealing one-stop partner wishes to submit a response to an appeal, it must submit its response to the State Workforce Development Board within five days of its receipt of the Notice of Appeal. 7.3. Within five days of receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the Chairperson of the State Workforce Development Board shall appoint a five-person standing committee to consider the appeal. 7.4. The presiding State Workforce Development Board standing committee shall consider the submissions of all partners when considering the appeal. 7.5. At its discretion, the State Workforce Development Board standing committee may hold a hearing on the appeal. Any such hearing may be held in person and/or electronically. 7.6. The State Workforce Development Board standing committee must issue a written decision on the appeal's merits within 30 days of receipt of the Notice of Appeal from the core partners. The State Workforce Development Board standing committee must provide a copy of its decision to all one-stop partners, which may be done via email.

2. Statewide Activities

A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.

Iowa Workforce Development issues and maintains policy and guidance for WIOA Title I programs. Policy and related guidance is disseminated to One-Stop center staff and

related entities via Handbook sections, field memos, conference calls, bi-annual state meetings for youth career planners and another for integrated One-Stop staff, and provides on-going technical assistance. A quality assurance team conducts annual monitoring of files and provides oversight and technical assistance to regions. This team is available to answer questions regarding policy, applicant eligibility, local planning, board structure, and related matters regarding Title I programming.

Local Workforce Development Boards are provided guidance and support by Iowa Workforce Development as well as the State of Iowa Workforce Development Board, and Iowa state agencies in each of the 15 regional workforce development areas. The state of Iowa provides funding for satellite offices and local area staff support. In an effort to increase the number of FTE's in the Ex-Offender program, a Workforce Advisor was added in the Clarinda Correctional Facility in 2012 and that program was further expanded during the past two years. Additionally, \$150,000 was dedicated to funding a State Library online system, Learning Express, in partnership with the State Librarian to provide virtual access points to job seekers in Iowa. Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training (260E)

The Industrial New Jobs Training Program provides businesses, which are expanding their Iowa workforce, with new employee training. Administered by Iowa's 15 community colleges, the program is financed through bonds sold by the colleges. Depending on wages paid, the business then diverts 1.5 or 3 percent of the Iowa state withholding taxes generated by the new positions to the community college to retire the bonds. Because of this structure, the training is available at what is essentially no cost since the bonds are retired with dollars that otherwise would have been paid to the state as withholding taxes. In addition to increasing worker productivity and company profitability, businesses participating in the Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program may also be eligible for reimbursement up to 50 percent of the annual gross payroll costs expended for on-the-job training, as well as a corporate tax credit if Iowa employment is increased by at least 10 percent. Other significant measures are outlined in the following:

During the 2013 legislative session, the Iowa Legislature made an historic investment in a portfolio of education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs designed to address Iowa's growing shortage of skilled workers and to increase the state's workforce delivery system capacity.

This \$40.3 million annual investment in worker training programs is delivered through Iowa's fifteen community colleges and is serving an increased number of Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds to help them acquire the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for gainful employment. It is funded from the state's gaming industry receipts. The following existing and new community college education, workforce development, job training, adult literacy programs and student financial aid programs are now being supported from this fund. All of these programs are under the administrative oversight of the Iowa Department of Education with the exception of the Kibbie Tuition Grant Program that is being administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission.

This fund assists Iowans from all social and economic backgrounds in acquiring the skills and industry recognized credentials needed for successful access to in-demand jobs. Education, workforce development, job training and adult literacy programs are

beneficiaries of this landmark legislation which exemplifies Iowa's ongoing commitment to innovative and job-driven solutions.

Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund

- Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund (260C.18A) \$15,100,000
- Adult Basic Education and Adult Literacy Programs (260C.50) \$ 5,500,000
- Pathways for Career and Employment Program (260H) \$ 5,000,000
- GAP Tuition Assistance Program (260I) \$ 2,000,000
- Work-based Learning Intermediary Network (256.40) \$ 1,500,000
- Kibbie Skilled Worker Shortage Tuition Grant Program (261.130) \$ 5,000,000
- ACE Infrastructure Fund (260G) \$ 6,000,000
- Workforce Preparation Outcome Reporting System \$ 200,000

Total \$40,300,000

Workforce Training and Economic Development (WTED) Fund (260C.18A)

\$15,100,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

The WTED fund was established in 2003 as part of the Grow Iowa Values Fund enabling legislation. The WTED fund has become an important source of financing for community college new program innovation, development and capacity building with a focus on career and technical education and the state's targeted industry clusters. This is the community colleges most flexible funding source and functions like a workforce development program block grant. This program can provide supplemental funding to support the PACE, GAP and adult literacy programs as needed.

Use of Funds

The monies in the Workforce Training and Economic Development fund may be used to support the following programs:

- Accelerated Career Education Program (260G).
- Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F).
- Career Academy Programs (260C.18A, subsection 2, paragraph c).
- Career & Technical Education Programs (260C.1, subsection 2).
- In-service Training and Retraining Programs (260C.1, subsection 3).
- Training and retraining programs for targeted industries (15.343, subsection 2, para. a).
- Pathways for Academic Career and Employment Program (260H).
- Gap Tuition Assistance Program (260I).
- Entrepreneurial education, small business assistance, and business incubators.
- National Career Readiness Certificate and the skills certification system endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers.

Targeted Industry Clusters

Priority is to be given to programs, projects and initiatives that fall within the states three targeted industry clusters. The program requires that **seventy percent** of the moneys

appropriated shall be used on projects or programs in the areas of advanced manufacturing, renewable fuels and renewable energy, information technology and insurance, and life sciences which include the areas of biotechnology, health care technology, and nursing care technology.

Pathways for Academic Career and Employment Program (260H)

\$5,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and was funded in FY 2014 for the first time to provide funding to community colleges for the development of projects in coordination with the economic development authority, the department of education, the department of workforce development, regional advisory boards, and community partners to implement a simplified, streamlined, and comprehensive process, along with customized support services, to enable eligible participants to acquire effective academic and employment training to secure gainful, quality, in-state employment. This program is closely aligned with the GAP tuition assistance program and the adult literacy program.

GAP Tuition Assistance Program (260I)

\$2,000,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This program was established in 2011 and first funded in FY 2013 to provide funding to community colleges for need-based tuition assistance to applicants to enable completion of non-credit, continuing education certificate training programs for in-demand occupations. This program is closely tied to the PACE career pathways program.

Adult education and literacy programs (260C.50)

\$5,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

\$3,883,000 is allocated for the ABE/GED adult literacy programs delivered by Iowa's Community Colleges as provided for in new IC Section 260C.50

\$1,467,000 is allocated for ELL adult literacy programs.

\$150,000 is allocated for DE staff support and related leadership activities.

Iowa was one of only three states that did not provide funding assistance for adult literacy programs. This new state funding is supplementing the federal Department of Labor allocation. It will build on existing career pathways policy and programs by investing in adult basic education and integrated learning programs to help more low-skilled adult workers obtain postsecondary credentials and skill sets required for employment in middle skill jobs. This funding may be used to develop and deliver contextualized coursework tied to a community colleges PACE career pathway and GAP tuition assistance programs.

Statewide Work-based Learning Intermediary Network (256.40)

\$1,500,000 was appropriated to support this program in FY 2016.

This enabling legislation and statewide network was created in 2009 with a one-time allocation of \$900,000 from the Department of Economic Development's targeted

industry program funding allocation. All fifteen community colleges established a regional intermediary network but only a few remained after the initial funding was exhausted.

The program is intended to prepare students for the workforce by connecting business and education by offering relevant, work-based learning activities to students and teachers, particularly opportunities in occupations relating to STEM or to opportunities in targeted industries identified by the EDA. The program focuses on providing students with job shadowing, internships and teacher tour learning experiences.

This program funding can be used to support work-based learning experiences for students enrolled in PACE career pathways and GAP tuition assistance programs.

Kibbie Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant Program (261.130)

\$5,000,000 was appropriated to the College Student Aid Commission to support this program in FY 2016.

The Kibbie Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant Program supports students enrolling in high demand career and technical education credit programs.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. One of several workforce programs that incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers. WOTC provides an incentive to employers to hire workers who traditionally have identified barriers to employment. In Iowa more than 52,000 workers are hired annually with the assistance of the employer tax credit assistance. It also reduces the burden on employers who hire workers facing barriers to employment.

Iowa Apprenticeship Act, Iowa Code Chapter 15B

The Iowa Apprenticeship Act was passed in 2014, increasing the available funding to \$3 million for training grants awarded to “sponsors” to conduct and maintain an apprenticeship program. Only apprenticeship programs that meet DOL/OA specific requirements and standards are eligible for training grants. A sponsor or lead sponsor (a trade organization, labor organization, employee organization or other incorporated entity representing a group of registered apprenticeship sponsors) may apply for an IEDA training grant.

Training Grants. Applications for training grants are accepted from any Iowa registered DOL/OA sponsor or lead sponsor and are due by February 1 for the previous training year (January through December). The amount of the training grants available is based on the statutory formula established under Iowa Code Chapter 15B based upon “contact hours.” Contact hours are determined based on an applicant’s combined total of apprentices and related technical instruction (RTI) hours for the most recent training year. This grant is based on the applicant’s proportionate share of statewide total of all contact hours.

Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress Board

In 2012, the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress Board (IPEP) was created by Executive Order and was charged with the “study and recommendation of solutions and policy alternatives for issues arising in the area of economic development”. The mandate of IPEP is to continuously identify and study economic growth issues facing Iowa and recommend solutions and policy alternatives. IPEP commissioned the Battelle Technology Partnership Practice to prepare a report on Iowa’s changing economic needs. A key finding was Iowa’s outpacing the nation in both GDP gains and total job gains from 2007 to 2013, and now exceeds its pre-recession levels in both economic output and total employment. Iowa’s economy continues to improve with most indices reflecting expansion and restored confidence in the economic climate. Despite softening of the agricultural economy, most sectors added jobs or maintained current levels through the end of 2015.

Iowa Workforce Development is currently conducting a full-scale review of its current policies, practices, and procedures with respect to the provisions of WIOA. The process of updating policies and procedures to ensure compliancy with WIOA provisions is nearing completion. A fully accessible and updated WIOA-compliant Policy and Procedure Manual for Workforce Services, including Iowa’s Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B Title I, is scheduled to be released by year’s end (2016). A comparison guide will be available to assist staff in transitioning to and conforming to the new, WIOA-compliant provisions.

B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor’s set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers

Governor’s Set-Aside Funding Use

Depending on the state set-aside fund availability the Governor, with guidance from the State Workforce Board, Iowa will establish implementation strategies based on the vision and goals in the State Plan. The State will designate specific employment sectors for priority spending based on regional sector strategy priorities and sufficient evidence of labor demand. Iowa will also look to invest resources in initiatives which may include the following:

- Bridging Youth Apprenticeship to Adult Apprenticeship
- Dual Enrollment
- Business Services
- Skills Gap and Labor Shortages
- Services to special populations and groups

The state intends to continue to provide the National Career Readiness (NCRC) assessment to Iowans as a tool to demonstrate work-readiness skills to employers.

The State is focused on improving the level and quality of Rapid Response services that will help affected workers to more quickly transition to new employment. Iowa recognizes that the local teams are often in a better position to identify layoff events

within their areas, leverage relationships with employers, unions and other community partners, and tailor pre-layoff activities to the specific event. The local Rapid Response teams, as directed by the State, initiate contact with an employer within 24 to 48 hours after receiving notice that a mass layoff event has or will occur.

The Local Service Delivery Areas, as recipients of State Rapid Response funds, provide a certain minimum level of Rapid Response services depending on the size of the dislocation event (see table below). These are for planning purposes only and can be adjusted by local areas.

Service Level	Workers Affected	Minimum Level of Rapid Response Services(each subsequent level includes services from previous level)
1	10-49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written and/or verbal presentation of basic transition information, including Unemployment Insurance, Dislocated worker programs, One-stop Center Resources, and relevant topics related to healthcare and retirement during employment transition.
2	50-99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic-specific workshops (i.e. resume writing, interview techniques, online job search, budgeting, career planning, coping with job loss), preferably onsite prior to layoff. • WIOA Dislocated Worker Program registration sessions • Tailored labor market information and related deliverables
3	100-249	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled visits to the affected worksite(s) to provide group and one-on-one assistance to affected workers • Targeted job fairs, specifically for the affected work group.
4	250- up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition center(s), on-site or within close proximity to the affected worksite, designed to provide services dedicated to affected work group.

Early intervention and comprehensive pre-layoff assistance is the foundation of the State's layoff aversion strategy which focuses on eliminating or minimizing the length of time impacted workers are unemployed. Building and maintaining relationships with the business community is critical. Regional Workforce Coordinators and local Business Services teams typically have established relationships with local businesses. These relationships allow for early warning of potential layoffs, as well as allow opportunity for early intervention to help avert a layoff through innovative solutions, including job-sharing and incumbent worker training. Statewide activities funds or Rapid Response funds may be available for statewide incumbent worker training activities.

Iowa will utilize direction from TEN 09-12 to create policy for Early Intervention/ Layoff Aversion efforts.

C. In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

Rapid Response

Rapid Response quickly coordinates services to layoffs and plant closings, and provides immediate aid to companies and the affected workers, including any situations that would be categorized as a natural disaster. During Iowa's most recent natural disaster, which occurred in 2008 as the result of widespread flooding, Iowa successfully coordinated Rapid Response efforts quickly and efficiently.

Following notification and confirmation of a layoff, the State Rapid Response Coordinator arranges an on-site meeting with the company, union officials (if applicable) and service providers in the region. Employee Information meetings are conducted to provide information about services available at IowaWORKS Centers which include:

- assistance finding new employment
- resume workshops
- career counseling
- training in a new career
- assistance filing unemployment insurance (UI) benefits

Other state agencies or community-based organizations are invited to participate in the meeting. These services are fully funded by the Department of Labor through the State of Iowa under the Dislocated Worker Program. A petition may need to be filed for UI benefits under Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for job losses attributed to foreign competition.

The policy for Rapid Response related to WIOA regulations is being developed and updated pertaining to WIOA section 134(a)(2)(A)(i)(II). The ultimate goal of an Iowa focused Rapid Response policy in terms of a disaster, mass layoff, or other dislocation event that exceeds the capacity of the local area to respond with existing resources; is to assist with the transition of affected workers and help them gain employment as soon as possible.

Rapid Response quickly coordinates services to layoffs and plant closings, and provides immediate aid to companies and the affected workers, including any situations that would be categorized as a natural disaster. The last major Iowa natural disaster occurred in 2008 as the result of widespread flooding and Iowa successfully coordinated Rapid Response efforts quickly and efficiently.

The integrity of the agency mission is the primary catalyst for updating existing policy related to WIOA and Rapid Response. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) will contribute to Iowa's economic growth by providing quality customer-driven services that support prosperity, productivity, health and safety for Iowans.

IWD has its own Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Continuity of Government (COG) and in situations of natural disasters, one of the first steps will be inter-agency coordination and following policy and incorporate planning for IWD essential functions.

As required, Rapid Response is structured to coordinate a statewide and local comprehensive response to specific emergency situations and convene all relevant partners.

The Federal legislation for both WARN and the WIOA contain specific requirements for employers and the State Dislocated Worker Unit (SDWU) in the event of a business closing or mass layoff. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) has been designated by the Governor as the State department to administer the provisions of WARN and WIOA and to serve as the lead state agency for the coordination of services to workers and communities affected by business closings and mass layoffs.

The coordination of Rapid Response is handled through the Title 1 WIOA Dislocated Worker Program via a designated Program Coordinator. The Rapid Response Coordinator utilizes existing policy to implement a plan of action to a plant closing or mass layoff which includes the following essential components:

- Contact with company and labor officials from the affected business.
- Contact with all service providing agencies in the local area.
- Contact with all One-Stop partners.
- Arrangement and facilitation of Rapid Response meetings.
- Arrangement and facilitation of employee information meetings.

In situations of natural disaster or other state-declared emergency situations, the policy will be updated to contain initial steps and other supplementary planning steps, per DOL policy guidance relative to disaster DWNEG's and TEGL 2-15:

- Coordination with FEMA
- Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management through the Duty Officer who coordinates with County Emergency Management systems.
- Work with Local Workforce Development Boards and community stakeholders
- Business or businesses impacted by economic downturn or the natural disaster and cause of unemployment and affecting the current workforce
- Priority of Service
- Disaster Unemployment Insurance
- Fish and Wildlife
- Monitoring
- Work on Private Property
- Prevailing Wages
- Participant Eligibility
- Safety/OSHA

Economic shocks, national crises and natural disasters require a proactive, broad-based community response. The actions and strategies required to navigate the community through these difficult times require expertise of many entities. IWD is committed to creating a policy which involves legitimate steps and assembles a diverse group of national, state and local organizations and agencies to address the short-term and long-term impacts of such events.

D. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State

disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.

Rapid Response & TAA

The Iowa Trade Adjustment Assistance program works to provide seamless services to participants through a functionally aligned and coordinated effort between the state and local staff, provides early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Act petition has been filed:

Rapid Response is initiated by communications between the State Trade Coordinator, State Rapid Response Coordinator, and also in conjunction with local level leadership. The coordination includes:

- Company
- Impacted employees
- Date of the event
- Union affiliation, if any
- Contact person at the company

The work between the State Program level Coordinator and the local area is for the purpose to organize the full array of Rapid Response services as necessary including on-site presentations at the business location or off site, whichever is necessary. Every effort is made to provide information sessions prior to the commencement of the lay-offs and/or plant closure. The presentation consists of an overview of the benefits and services that can be expected from each of the partner groups. During these sessions, the emphasis is how the 3-partner-agency staff will be working together as a team to offer the customer individualized comprehensive reemployment benefits and services. TAA processes and protocols are followed as far as applications and a detailed description of TAA benefits/overview.

Work with the local area staff to determine a plan of action and potential co-enrollments in order to align services between WIOA, TAA and NEG DW so all customers would benefit from the service. All customers receive assessments, review labor market information, establish employment goals, and develop Individual Employment Plans that are shared and agreed upon among all partners/counselors involved. Leveraging of resources is utilized by having WIOA take the lead in conducting assessments (i.e., basic education levels, aptitudes, interests, financial situation, barriers to employment success) from which the results guide all partners/counselors in developing re-employment plans with the customers. These plans identify whether TAA training is necessary to secure employment, any possible barriers to employment/training success, and how those barriers will be addressed. Case management is done via a common computer system and all partners/staff have access to. Priority is given to ongoing communication for example,

periodic combined staff meetings to reinforce the open communication between a customer and relevant program representatives to address customer needs or issues while working toward an integrated approach to address such needs and issues.

Once a customer enters approved training, there is additional coordination with W-P and Unemployment Insurance for an individual's ongoing income support.

IWD has developed and managed resources to integrate data provided through different agencies administering benefits and services in order to ensure consistent program administration and fiscal integrity, as well as reliable fiscal and performance reporting.

TAA, Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), Re-Employment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA), WIOA, and W-P/Employment Service utilize Lotus Notes, IWORKS, and the UI mainframe systems to collect universal information (e.g., customer demographics, veteran Information, migrant worker information, employment status, disability, older worker, low income, public assistance, needs and barriers, etc.) for each customer. Through these systems, customer enrollment in various programs, customer participation, and exit outcomes are tracked. In an effort to ensure reliable reporting, several mechanisms are in place. Each database (e.g., Lotus Notes) is programmed with its own logical checks or warnings that, depending on the nature of the potential error, will alert either the front-line user to it or the Trade Act Coordinator and the IT team member, at the time of running reports, to it. Such potential errors are examined and corrected as appropriate to ensure data integrity.

Furthermore, regular program monitoring (elements of which include reviews of participant files and the corresponding management information systems) as well as ongoing staff training improves the reliability of performance reporting.

Since the timing and level of detail for TAA presentations depend on whether or not a TAA certification exists or is expected, the analysis is organized accordingly. Moreover, included within the concept of expected TAA certification are those communities that have experienced many trade-related dislocations and thus have extensive knowledge of the program and an expectation of certification.

If a TAA certification has already occurred, the Rapid Response team still uses the initial meeting with workers to present the broad array of One-Stop Career Center services, but the TAA segment often becomes much larger and more important than it would be otherwise. Indeed, it is common that when a certification is in hand, the initial Rapid Response meeting might segue into a TAA benefits rights interview, at which most states enroll participants. These presentations are always conducted by TAA staff, who are best able to answer technical eligibility and service questions.

b. Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

1. Work-Based Training Models

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan,

describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

Adult and Dislocated Workers Program Requirements

Under this plan, Iowa places a high priority on experiential learning, or work-based learning opportunities. This is an emerging practice for Iowa's Adult and Dislocated Worker program. The plan for development of this program is included herein. Currently, One-Stop staff work with area businesses to identify need and areas to incorporate skill building and mentoring into employment opportunities. These activities benefit both the customer by assisting them to gain exposure to an occupation while gaining skills, but also the business by helping them to train an individual while the program assists with the training costs.

On-the-Job Trainings (OJT) is beneficial to participants who are prepared to enter the workforce long-term. OJTs are used to teach a participant specialized skills and competencies needed to perform a specific job at a worksite where there may be a chance for advancement. The participating business has a major investment in the OJT process as they assist to complete a training plan, and are the employer of record. Incumbent worker training is designed to assist employers in upgrading the skills of their current workforce. These efforts have shown to increase the competitiveness of employers in their designated markets while creating an internal workforce whose skills are assisting the employer to remain competitive with a skilled workforce and increased worker tenure. Employees benefit by receiving training to upgrade their skills, wages, and increased experiences within an organization.

Transitional jobs are a time-limited work experience that is combined with comprehensive employment and supportive services. This work-based learning activity is for individuals with barriers to employment, are chronically unemployed, or have an inconsistent work history. The purpose is to support individuals to establish a work history, demonstrate success in a work environment and develop skills to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment.

Incumbent worker training is designed to assist employers in upgrading the skills of their current workforce. These efforts have shown to increase the competitiveness of employers in their designated markets while creating an internal workforce whose skills are assisting the employer to remain competitive with a skilled workforce and increased worker tenure. Employees benefit by receiving training to upgrade their skills, wages, and increased experiences within an organization.

Customized training provides training that is specific to an employer (or group of employers) specific requirements so that individuals will be hired by the employer after successful completion of the training. Customized training is designed to provide local areas with flexibility to ensure that training meets the unique needs of the job seekers and employers or groups of employers. These types of activities are very effective training models for both youth and adult populations. Gaining hands-on training in a work environment allows individuals to gain not only the transferable skills needed in employment, but the soft skills employers require.

Another strategy of Iowa's is to engage industry partners and facilitate work-based placements from the workforce system into its member businesses. The industry partner can speak the language of both worlds and facilitate enhanced relations and perceptions between private and public sector. The state enthusiastically supports work-based training strategies including incumbent worker training projects that will make both the business and employees more competitive. However, this is

One-Stop staff currently work with area businesses to identify need and areas to incorporate skill building and mentoring into employment opportunities. These activities benefit both the job-seeker by assisting them to gain exposure to an occupation while gaining skills, but also the business by helping them to train an individual while the program assists with the training costs. On-the-Job Training (OJT) is beneficial to participants who are prepared to enter the workforce long-term. OJTs are used to teach a participant specialized skills and competencies needed to perform a specific job at a worksite where there may be a chance for advancement. The participating business has a major investment in the OJT process as they assist to complete a training plan, and are the employer of record.

IWD received a Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant/National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) which provides support for the development and coordination of sector partnerships by targeting three in-demand sectors. The three primary sectors which are targeted include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare and transportation and logistics. IN coordination with local areas, this program is piloting several new programs which involve experiential learning activities including On-the-Job Training (OJT) for dislocated and incumbent workers. IWD is looking to other states in the development and implementation of these strategies as well as to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation and Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Team models for adaptation to Adult and Dislocated Worker strategies. This will also allow for increased alignment with these core partner agencies. IWD will incorporate relevant policies and practices to ensure the highest of quality standards are achieved.

As part of Iowa's ongoing effort to improve OJT opportunities and ensure quality standards for businesses and job-seekers, IWD lawyers collaborated with IVRS' staff to provide training and education on the wage and hour rules and the Fair Labor Standards Act related to OJT services. These types of partner-to-partner learning sessions help to ensure OJT programs are conducted in a manner that is consistent with legal requirements; and to ensure that the program achieves the state purpose which is "participants will be compensated while learning an occupation."

As a result, IVRS enhanced OJT policies to include the following requirements:

1. The trainee receives a stipend, but is not an employee of the company;
2. The trainee receives a salary, and is an employee of the company.

The expected outcome of both is that the participant either earns a skill that is transportable to another company, or the participant is retained by the training company and achieves an employment outcome. This design creates automatic incentives for employers to provide training which results in improved skills and increased marketable

attributes to the IJT participant. Furthermore, IVRS collects concrete data on OJT participant outcomes which is regularly reviewed and used in making future program recommendations.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team visits programs to establish rapport and discuss program management, performance data, professional development needs and program compliance. Such visits may also follow specific trainings to ensure concepts are being applied in the learning environment. Performance data and monitoring visits alert staff to programs that need assistance. In the technical assistance model, staff visit programs that have been identified with a need to develop program improvement strategies. With guidance from Iowa's adult education and literacy team, the local program establishes an improvement plan. The Iowa adult education and literacy team monitors performance closely and conducts follow-up visits to ensure improvement plans are being implemented and are successful. One third of the programs are monitored with site visits annually and the remaining programs receive a "desktop" monitoring. The monitoring tool addresses data collection, instructional practice, benchmark gains, curriculum and lesson plan development, assessment practices, and fiscal management. Additional elements for site visits include classroom observations and student surveys. All monitoring results in a detailed compliance letter which documents findings, recommendations and commendations based on practice and implementation of policy.

As part of the Program Monitoring (PM) system, the Iowa Adult Education and Literacy team has developed an instrument tracking the criteria outlined in the WIOA Title II legislation for running an effective and high quality program. The PM process also evaluates fiscal and legal areas of responsibility. Each local program implemented under the provisions of the act will be evaluated by using formative and summative methods, monitored, and reviewed by the IDOE adult education and literacy team from the Bureau of Community Colleges. Monitoring tools include five sections:

- Financial Monitoring
- Program Management Monitoring
- Data Integrity and Implementation Monitoring
- Teacher Quality Monitoring
- Classroom Observation; and
- Student Survey

One third of the programs have an on-site audit conducted requiring formative and summative performance data, copies of program and fiscal policies, and interviews with staff and students to verify compliance with all federal/state mandates and requirements. The remaining 80 percent of the programs have a desktop audit which includes Financial, Program Management, and Data Integrity Monitoring. As Iowa has benefited from a state monitoring review increased attention to data monitoring has been incorporated to ensure local program compliance with AEFLA (Sec. 212).

In addition, for ongoing assessment purposes:

1. The Iowa AEL requires all agencies to submit ongoing data that reflect student participation levels and progress along with monthly attendance.

2. The IDOE conducts an annual comprehensive qualitative program survey. This survey is required of all participating agencies and involves practitioner focus groups and interviews of both teachers and students. The results provide recommendations for state level planning and development activities, identify best practices and emerging needs, and help focus professional development and training to ensure effective instructional programs for targeted populations.
3. The Iowa AEL presently incorporates the Core Performance data matching system to track student outcomes in the areas of obtaining or retaining employment, as well as transitioning to postsecondary education or training. Under WIOA, the IDOE in collaboration with the IWD will create an accountability system to track and report the employment follow up required in the new legislation.

In addition to the monitoring tool, the PY16 Iowa Assessment Policy has established the following data requirements:

- Monthly entry of hours of instruction;
- Monthly exiting of students absent from the program for 90 days with no scheduled services;
- Assignment of a college issued identification number;
- Uniform procedures for the collection of student social security number; and
- Monthly review of data integrity reports to implement strategies for program improvement.

Monitoring reports are being tied to continuous improvement plans with required corrective action plans for any findings. The reports highlight the commendations for best practices and recommendations for improvement or initiatives that demonstrate promise.

Through the incorporation of skill competencies needed by employers, trainees are learning a range of specific skills needed as well as how to apply those skills in the appropriate job-setting. By working with employers to ensure their needs are being met, OJT participants who complete OJT are well positioned to add immediate value to the workplace and acquire marketable skills that allow for increased transition along one's chosen career path.

2. Registered Apprenticeship

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

Registered Apprenticeship

The Governor, with support of the Iowa Legislature, increased the state's capacity to meet the rapidly evolving needs of employers through increased support to Registered Apprenticeship programs. In 2014, funding to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs was tripled. IWD recently received a grant to hire a Registered Apprenticeship Statewide Coordinator. IWD is contracting with the Department of Education to identify needs and gaps in the state's Registered Apprenticeship programs and will be applying

for the expansion grant to increase the state's immediate and ongoing capacity to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs. IWD will be working to build a model for Pre-Apprenticeships for out of school youth and for adults. IWD will be collaborating with IVRS in this process and looking at current successful IVRS programs which incorporate Registered Apprenticeships. Under WIOA, Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors that request to be Eligible Training Providers are automatically included on the list and will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial eligibility or initial eligibility procedures as other providers because they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure to become a registered apprenticeship program sponsor with the Department of Labor. These program sponsors must indicate their interest in being an Eligible Training Provider. Registered apprenticeship program sponsors will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies Iowa Workforce Development that it no longer wants to be included on the list. The biennial review must also include verification of the registration status of registered apprenticeship programs. Within the state's goals and throughout the plan and strategies there is a strong focus on RAP. The state has launched initiatives supporting RAP and there is a demand as well as a plan for doubling Iowa's active Registered Apprentices in the next four years. The Iowa Apprenticeship Training Program Act (15B) was enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 2014. The purpose of 15B to increase the number of registered apprentices in Iowa by providing training grants to eligible apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeships are a proven approach to preparing workers for in-demand jobs and meeting the needs of business for a highly skilled workforce that can innovate and adapt. The program is administered by IEDA in coordination with the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Only apprenticeship programs registered and meeting USDOL standards, known as a sponsor, are eligible for an IEDA training grant. An apprenticeship training fund was created as a revolving fund in the State Treasury under the control of the IEDA. \$3 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2015. A statutory formula is used to allocate training grants to eligible sponsors. Awarded funds may only be used towards the cost of conducting and maintaining a registered apprenticeship training program.

3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Determining Training Provider Eligibility

Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Transition

IWD has submitted an Action Plan to address the transition to a WIOA-compliant ETPL. Below is the outline of the Action Plan.

1. Background.

1.1. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) supersedes WIA Title I, and re-authorizes programs for youth, adults, and dislocated workers under Title I.

1.2. In order for a training provider to be able to receive Title I program funds under WIOA, it and its program must be qualified as an eligible training provider by meeting certain criteria and be placed on an eligible training provider list.

1.3. WIOA requires that each state must maintain a list of eligible training providers and their eligible training programs. The list must be accompanied by relevant performance and cost information and must be made widely available, including in electronic formats, and presented in a way that is easily understood, in order to maximize informed consumer choice and serve all significant population groups.

1.4. On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 41-14, “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Training Provider Eligibility Transition,” to help usher in implementation of WIOA before the issuance of final implementing regulations.

1.5. TEGL 41-14 required states to implement WIOA section 122’s ETPL requirements on or before July 22, 2015.

1.6. Iowa did not implement WIOA section 122 in accordance with TEGL No. 41-14.

1.7. This contains Iowa’s plan to implement an eligible training provider list that is compliant with WIOA Title I and its implementing regulations.

2. Plan for Transition to a WIOA-Compliant ETPL.

2.1. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) transferred its existing ETPL to a new web-based display, using Tableau. This ETPL is not fully in line with the consumer choice requirements under WIOA, as it does not have relevant cost or performance data, but is nonetheless easy to understand and sortable by county (and, consequently region/local area, since Iowa’s regions/local areas have county lines as their borders). This ETPL is meant as a bridge to a WIOA-compliant WIOA. It can be viewed online at: www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/eligible-training-provider

2.2. On August 26, 2016, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) posted a request for proposals (RFP) for a new workforce services case management system. This RFP included a preference for a system that includes an ETPL feature that meets the requirements under WIOA. If IWD is unable to find a suitable ETPL feature as part of this case management system procurement. If it is not, IWD will separately procure an ETPL that is WIOA compliant.

2.3. On or before October 15, 2016, IWD will distribute a draft policy and procedures for implementing WIOA section 122 and the final implementing regulations regarding the ETPL to the following stakeholders:

- Entities currently on the ETPL;
- State Workforce Development Board members;

- Local workforce development board members;
- Local WIOA Title I service providers;
- Local WIOA Title II service providers; and
- Register Apprenticeship programs.

2.4. IWD will solicit from these entities comments on the draft policy and procedures for implementing a WIOA-compliant ETPL.

2.5. IWD will also post the draft policy and procedures on its website to solicit public comments for 30 days.

2.6. IWD will consider all comments received following the comment period, make appropriate changes, and present a final draft to the State Workforce Development Board to be ratified at the first regularly scheduled board meeting following the close of the public comment period.

2.7. Upon the State Board's adoption of final policy and procedures for transitioning to a WIOA-compliant ETPL, the final policy and procedures will be distributed to stakeholders to make sure that entities currently on the ETPL know of the forthcoming changes mandated by WIOA and to encourage qualified entities apply for ETPL inclusion. This will include IWD working with partners to conduct outreach to Registered Apprenticeship programs and WIOA Title II service providers to increase those entities' presence on the ETPL.

2.8. As part of its plan to transition to a WIOA-compliant web-based ETPL, IWD will conduct outreach to entities on the ETPL to help test and implement any new ETPL system that IWD procures.

4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program.

Implementation and Monitoring for Priority of Service

The local boards have incorporated priority of service processes and procedures for the identified target populations in each of their local plans. To ensure compliance with the requirements of priority of service to target populations, the State will update monitoring processes and procedures to include on-site visits, desk-monitoring, periodic case reviews and electronic review methods to ensure target populations are provided services in accordance with the WIOA requirements and that services and supports are sufficient to meet the additional needs of targeted populations.

A major milestone in the work which is being done by the core partners in Iowa is the development of a One-Stop System customer-centered design model. This model is being developed and will be rolled out to the local areas in 2017. It includes the creation of an incentive program to encourage center staff to provide enhanced customer service to ALL

Iowans. The program currently under development by the core partners includes planning for the creation of the following:

- Collaborative core partner handbook for providing excellent services to job-seekers
- Guidance specific to serving priority populations, such as recipients of public assistance and others identified in WIOA and by the Governor of the State of Iowa
 - Formal guidance on engaging businesses and recruiting community partners
 - Online resource hub for One-Stop Center staff
- Web-based training
- Policy guidance
- Connection to additional resources and staff development opportunities
 - New staff development and training requirements
 - Center certification process
 - Formal recognition of high-achieving centers, staff and clients
 - Improved monitoring procedures developed by the core partners
 - Technical assistance to center staff
 - Center self-assessment tool
 - Enhanced customer satisfaction surveys
 - Formal, outside program evaluation process
 - Improved processes for providing technical assistance and support to centers

Creation of an advanced training certification program of the One-Stop Center to ensure all One-Stop centers are accessible and operating consistently and that staff have access to the knowledge, resources and supports across the state. Tools used in the monitoring process will include on-site visits, desk monitoring, periodic review of customer data and other methods as necessary to properly monitor the Priority of Service for Public Assistance Recipients.

5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

Local Area Transfer of Funds

Workforce Development Boards (WDB) must initiate any requests for the transfer of funds. The state will consider requests for transfer of funds based on the following criteria:

1. Before submitting a transfer request, the Workforce Development Board should analyze the changing economic conditions in their Local Area in order to identify a need for additional funding flexibility. If such a demand exists and there is a need to transfer more than the 20 percent of the original allocated or re-allotted formula allocation, the RWDB must submit a local plan modification to IWD. NOTE: Transfers from

administrative funds to program funds within the same program's funding stream (i.e., Adult FY administrative funds to Adult FY program funds) do not require a plan modification.

2. All requests must include the following information:

a. The percent and dollar amount of the Adult or Dislocated Worker formula funds to be transferred.

b. The justification for this transfer between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs must be explained in the request, described in the local plan modification, and must, at a minimum, include the following information:

i. General purpose or reason for the transfer between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs;

ii. An explanation of the need for the transfer between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs;

iii. Information on how the transfer will affect the program from which the funds are being transferred;

iv. Narrative explanation of how the transferred funds will be used;

c. WDB are still expected to continue operating Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and are also expected to meet their agreed upon performance numbers, regardless of the funding transfer.

d. Once approved, IWD will monitor the affected RWDB for positive performance outcomes from these programs.

3. IWD will review the transfer request to ensure it will not negatively impact performance or the potential to acquire additional program resources, such as National Dislocated Worker Grants.

4. The state will have the authority and option to deny transfer requests based on the aforementioned criteria and to consider additional factors based on circumstances.

c. Youth Program Requirements

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

1. Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants or contracts.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

Youth Program Requirements

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129, the criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and a plan for how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures for the youth program are as follows:

In 2012 Iowa embarked on a service delivery model process that ensures services are integrated at the front line level and unified at the management level including core partners within the One-Stop. By refocusing the local regions' performance assessment from individual program performance measures to universal outcome measures, service seamless, efficient integration can be further enhanced regionally with the core and required partners.

Joint collection measures will be easier to manage and more clearly understood by Regional Workforce Development Boards (RWDB), businesses, and workforce investment system partners.

As the Grant Recipient for the funding under the Act, the Workforce Development Board will be governed by the procurement policy as developed in accordance with Federal, State and local policies and approved by Iowa Workforce Development and the State Board. Iowa Workforce Development is the administrative/fiscal agent for this WDB and in this capacity administers and oversees all phases of the WDB's operations. The WDB has the responsibility to provide policy guidelines for the workforce region.

Requests for proposals (RFPs) shall be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance for youth workforce investment activities. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to the maximum extent practical. The WDB Director shall develop a method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting contractors. WDB staff will review all proposals that meet the submission requirements and may submit summary reports of all proposals received to the Workforce Development Board as directed by the WDB. The WDB may review summary reports of all proposals received and select the agency or the service provider that it deems best able to operate the program efficiently and effectively, with price and other factors considered. After evaluation and recommendation of the RFPs by the Regional WDB staff, the Workforce Development Board will make the final selection of service providers. The Regional Workforce Development Board will have final authority for selection of service providers.

Final selections for funding will primarily be based on, yet not limited to, effectiveness, demonstrated performance, fiscal accountability, cost/price analysis, staffing, potential for meeting performance standards/goals, program operation and coordination, quality of training especially in addressing competency deficiencies of clients, participant characteristics, past performance of the bidder, non-duplication of services, and funding.

A selection committee consisting of appointed WDB members, WDB Chairman, and WDB staff shall review competitive proposals. This task may also be assigned to an existing WDB committee (i.e. Youth Council or RFP Proposal Review Committee). The committee shall submit a recommendation to the full WDB for their review and final approval. The State Operations Team shall provide training, guidance, and/or technical

assistance on an as needed basis to the selection committee. This shall include a comprehensive review of all proposals received by WDB staff.

The evaluation process will be divided into five major steps:

1. General review of the proposals;
2. Evaluation of the bidder's qualifications;
3. Appraisal of the technical aspects of each proposal;
4. Assessment of the cost aspects of each proposal and
5. Positive review of demonstrated performance, effectiveness, potential for meeting performance goals, costs, and quality of training.

Final selections will primarily be based on, yet not limited to, effectiveness, demonstrated performance, potential for meeting performance goals, costs, quality of training, participant characteristics, past workforce development experience and performance of the bidder and non-duplication of services.

2. Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.

Improving Outcomes for Out-of-school Youth

WIOA has an increased focus on serving out-of-school eligible youth, as well as those young people identified as most in need. Program focus includes: career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and ending services with employment in a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education. The youth program aims to reposition this population of young people as an asset to employers whom have a need for skilled workers. Employers are a critical partner who can provide participants with essential experiential learning opportunities to enhance and apply their skills in a real-world employment setting. To reach this population several methods can be approached, however, connecting with young people where they are has proven to be extremely effective. Being visible in the community and meeting youth outside of traditional service delivery locations, such as: parks, recreation centers, shopping malls, community centers, health clinics, clubs, movie theaters, community-based and faith-based organizations, One-Stop centers, emergency food programs and homeless shelters could assist you in your recruitment efforts.

Collaboration efforts with core partners is critical to establish referral processes, identification of how to blend and braid resources to reduce duplication of services, and to ensure appropriate services are offered by qualified professionals. This may include, but is not limited to partnerships with Adult Education and Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation. Given the out-of-school age increase to age 24, many Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants may be eligible for the WIOA youth

program. Local areas are encouraged to partner with their local PROMISE JOBS staff to reach the TANF population. Community organizations can also be another strong partner in reaching out-of-school youth. Additional populations to target are Veterans and youth with disabilities. Utilizing multiple methods to connect with out-of-school youth ensures that as many OSY as possible are reached, which may include disconnected youth. Career planners will work with youth participants to: identify a career pathway which includes appropriate education and employment goals, considers career planning, the results of the objective assessment, and that prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participant. Identification of career pathways allows participants to see a clear path towards sustainable employment, while obtaining stackable credentials. Experiential learning or work-based learning activities is considered the most important program element. The association between work-based learning opportunities and positive outcomes is a generally accepted standard. Experiential Learning activities available to youth participants include: Work Experience (WEP), Pre-Apprenticeship (PRE), Internships (INT), Job Shadowing (SHW) and On-the-Job Training (OJT). These activities are designed to enable youth to gain exposure to the world of work and its requirements by helping them acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. These opportunities provide the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and skill development and must include academic and occupational education.

3. Describe how the state will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented, including quality pre-apprenticeship programs under the work experience program element.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

Youth Programming

The state plans to carry out these activities by assisting young people who are disconnected, disengaged and lack self-sufficiency by engaging them in employment, education and training that will support them in succeeding in the labor market and transition into successful adulthood.

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential (RBS) (SEC)
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate (SEC)
- Experiential Learning—Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component, academic and occupational education, which may include—
- Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year (WEP)
- Pre-apprenticeship programs (PRE)
- Internships and job shadowing (INT), (SHW)

- On-the-job training opportunities (OJT)
- Institutional/Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if determined by the local board (OJT), (IST), (CUS), (APP), (ENT)
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster (PRE), (APP), (IST)
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate (LDS)
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months (MEN)
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate (PPS)
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate (G&C)
- Financial literacy education (FIN)
- Entrepreneurial skills training (ENT)
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services (JSP)
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and
- Training (WEP), (MEN), etc.; (SEC-when leads to credential)

According to CLASP, 5 million youth between the ages of 16-24 are out of school and are not working. This population of “out-of-school” youth includes; but it not limited to: high school dropouts, high school graduates who not looking for work and youth who may be homeless, incarcerated, parenting or exiting from foster care without a stable place to live. The WIOA Youth Program will focus its efforts on serving eligible young people in these target groups and other youth who are identified as the most in need.

Participants and career planners’ work together to determine which elements are provided based on the objective assessment and individual service strategy. This process assists participants to obtain a focus to begin to develop competencies for the world of work. This includes identification of skills, needed skills, work-readiness, advanced training, career pathways, etc.

Goal setting and progression towards meeting those goals is another important component for participants. Identification of appropriate career pathways goals, career/employment goals and education/academic goals assists participants to formulate an action plan and make gains towards their career goals. Participants who are identified as basic skills deficient will have a goal of improving their skills in reading or math as applicable.

A variety of activities and services are available for youth to upgrade their skills through education and training or workforce activity. Experiential learning activities are considered the most important program activities offered. These activities assist participants to gain exposure to the world of work while learning valuable skills and personal attributes that will assist them in future work opportunities. Career exploration is possibly the most important element of an experiential learning activity as it assists young people in making more informed decisions regarding their future.

Experiential learning activities include: job shadow, work experience, internships, on-the-job training and pre-apprenticeship.

Many young people need supportive services to ensure they can participate, or continue to participate in a WIOA activity or partner activity. Career planners will assess need and availability of funds outlined in their local service plan when offering support services.

Program participation concludes when a participant has met their goals and achievement objectives, has been determined to be self-sufficient and is no longer in need of additional services. Continued contact by the career planner is in place for 12 months, in addition, participants are encouraged to utilize one-stop and partner services for future needs.

4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.

OOS Youth Requiring Additional Assistance

The following outlines the criterion for both out-of-school youth, and in-school youth who require additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment. For youth who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment, additional assistance may be defined to include:

- Migrant Youth
- Incarcerated Parent
- Behavior Problems at School
- Family Literacy Problems
- Domestic Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Chronic Health Conditions
- One or more grade levels below appropriate for age
- Cultural barriers that may be a hindrance to employment
- American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian
- Refugee

- Locally defined “additional assistance”

Previously under WIA, local areas could define additional criterion for a youth who “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment” however under WIOA local areas may no longer define local barriers, however, the Governor can identify additional populations to target throughout the state and sub-state regions. For this reason, the Governor’s office has been working closely with LMI to identify additional populations with barriers to employment, including youth.

5. Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school,” indicate that is the case and provide the state policy for determining whether a youth is attending or not attending school.

Attending School

Not attending school is defined as an individual who meets one of the following criteria:

- no longer attending, or registered to attend, any school and has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- not attending, or registered to attend, any school and has either graduated from high school or has an equivalent diploma; or
- attending a program through: Adult Education and Literacy, YouthBuild or Job Corps.

Attending school is defined as an individual is attending classes or is registered to begin classes and one of the following criteria is met:

- a public or nonpublic educational institution offering any grade kindergarten through twelve;
- homeschooled students;
- alternative school program; or
- within an institution providing post-secondary instruction which uses in its name the term "college", "academy", "institute", "university" or a similar term to imply that the person is primarily engaged in education.

6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the State definition which must further define how to determine if an individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. If not using the portion of the definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), indicate that is the case.

Basic Skills Deficient

Basic Skills Deficient is defined as an individual who meets one of the following criteria:

- Is a youth that has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level (below 9.0 grade level) on a generally accepted standardized test;
- A youth or adult that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society;
- Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or
- Is enrolled in Title II Adult Education (including enrolled for ESL).

d. Single-area State Requirements

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

- 1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)**
- 2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)**
- 3. A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**
NA
- 4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.**
- 5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.**
- 6. How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated. Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.**
- 7. How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate title I activities with those activities under title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.**

8. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

e. Waiver Requests (optional)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;

2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;

3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;

4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- A. supporting employer engagement;**
- B. connecting education and training strategies;**
- C. supporting work-based learning;**
- D. improving job and career results, and**
- E. other guidance issued by the Department.**

5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

6. Describes the processes used to:

- A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;**
- B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;**
- C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;**
- D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.**
- E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report**

7. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

NA

Title I-B Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Yes
3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions. Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor

local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); Yes

Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

a. Employment Service Professional Staff Development.

1. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Professional Staff Development

Iowa Workforce Development regional offices have implemented procedures to provide opportunities and to encourage participation in a range of professional development activities for workforce partners and staff. Staff development which incorporates the learning and awareness of required and optional partner programs as well as other community and faith based initiatives and organizations are provided in the following contexts:

Team Meetings and Combined Team Meetings

- Business services and youth,
- Business services and skills teams,
- Others as needed based on local area or Center needs.

Wednesday Morning Monthly Meetings

- Statewide Integrated Semi-Annual Meetings, in Partnership with the State

Additional Semi-Annual Meetings

- February and October, and Federal Holidays

Topics Include:

- Community Partnership Meetings
- Procedures & Policy Reviews
- Other Relevant Topics as Identified by Local Areas, Partners and/ or the State.

Throughout the course of the year a variety of professional development opportunities are available by and to each of the partners within the workforce delivery system and beginning in 2016, a formal team will be charged with ensuring that professional development practices are appropriate to the current needs of the workforce system

beneficiaries, providers and employers. This team will also be developing guidelines for assessing program effectiveness, progress toward measureable goals and adherence to the Unified State Plan and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, well as any additional requirements resulting from WIOA. Training and staff development will be fundamental to the successful implementation of Iowa's Unified State Plan. Per the statewide Memorandum of Understanding, the partners will collaborate to develop uniform One-Stop Certification criteria that reflect the following principles:

- One-Stop Centers will provide excellent customer service to job seekers, workers, and business.
- One-Stop Centers will reflect innovative and effective service design.
- One-Stop Centers will operate with integrated management systems.
- One-Stop Centers will operate with high-quality staffing.
- One-Stop Centers will increase physical and programmatic access to workforce services for individuals with barriers to employment, including but not limited to individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP.

The Partners will collaborate to develop policies, procedures, proven and promising practices, and templates to aid Local Boards in the One-Stop Certification process. One-Stop Center Local Staff must be routinely trained and keenly aware of how particular functions support and contribute to the One-Stop Center and One-Stop System.

Appropriate policies, procedures, guidance, and proven and promising practices will help ensure that One-Stop Center Local Staff are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. As part of the over-all plan, the partners plan on forming a Skills Development Team to help train One-Stop Center Local Staff as part of an ongoing learning process that will develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to provide superior service to workers and job seekers, including those individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP, that is responsive labor-market needs.

2. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

Wagner-Peyser Strategies

The one-stop delivery system is the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides collective access to career services to meet the diverse needs of job seekers. Career and training services, tailored to the individual needs of jobseekers, form the backbone of the one-stop delivery system. While some jobseekers may only need self-service or other basic career services like job listings, labor market information, labor exchange services or information about other services, some jobseekers will need services that are more comprehensive and tailored to their individual career needs. These services may include comprehensive skills assessments, career planning, and

development of an individual employment plan that outlines the needs and goal of successful employment.

Basic career services must be made available to all job seekers and include services such as labor exchange services, labor market information, job listings, and information on partner programs. Individualized career services identified in WIOA and described in these proposed regulations are to be provided by local areas as appropriate to help individuals to obtain or retain employment.

Continuous Quality Improvement Model

The Continuous Quality Improvement Model has been identified as a possible tool or model for use in guiding staff development and center activities. This method is consistent with the purpose and authorized scope of each of the programs, and guide development and implementation of effective quality improvement strategies.

A framework of standards will be adopted to be used by one-centers and one-center staff to assess their own performance in providing quality services to participants. The standards provide one-stop operators with a framework for what programs should know and be able to demonstrate. By completing a self-assessment with the certification tool, one-stop centers can identify their strengths, as well as areas needing improvement. This is meant to furnish the data to make informed decisions in providing professional development activities and personal exploration. This process will help ensure well-qualified staff who are capable of meeting the diverse needs of the center's participants.

The standards framework consists of three components:

1. Standards that are broad descriptors of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to effective adult education instruction;
2. Indicators that are sample concepts for implementing a standard; and
3. Examples of practices, which are some samples that demonstrates application of a standard.

b. Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through One-Stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

Information and Meaningful Assistance

Iowa's Integrated Service Model incorporates UI assistance into the normal customer process flow in each center. As customers enter a facility, staff are trained to ask "what brought you to the center today?" If the answer is related to the losing of a job, staff have been trained to assist the customer with the first basic need which is addressing the UI application. Each of the centers have computers available for the filing on-line claims. Local staff have the discretion to offer assistance as needed on a case by case basis.

One-stop teams will conduct an initial basic assessment of individual's needs and career goals. Customers will have immediate access to employment and skill advancement

services in basic career services, with connection of the customer to additional individualized career services, when determined appropriate in order for a customer to achieve their career goal and obtain or retain employment. Staff will ensure all center customers have seamless access to all IowaWORKS services. Customers receive services through Wagner-Peyser (WP) and will automatically be co-enrolled into WIOA Adult and WIOA Dislocated Worker if date of birth and selective service requirements are met. Co-enrollment into all other programs to include WIOA Youth, Promise Jobs, Veteran's programs, etc. may be provided as appropriate.

One-Stop centers must engage Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, to ensure maximum availability of employment and skill advancement services to help claimants return to work as quickly as possible. Staff will encourage and facilitate access for center customers to all appropriate career services at each and every center visit to continuously engage them in the service delivery process until employed in self-sufficient employment. Customers will have continued access to services until their career or employment goal is achieved.

The Partners recognize that the State's workforce services must meet the needs of job seekers, workers, and businesses in order to help develop thriving communities where all citizens succeed and businesses prosper. A cornerstone of achieving this goal is to provide excellent customer service to job seekers.

Excerpt from the statewide MOU:

The Partners agree that State and Local One-Stop System offices, including but not limited to One-Stop Centers, must:

- Reflect a welcoming environment to all customer groups who are served by the State and Local One-Stop Systems.
- Develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.
- Improve the skills of job-seeker and worker customers. The State and Local One-Stop Systems must create opportunities for individuals at all skill levels and levels of experience by providing customers, including individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP, as much timely, labor market, job-driven information, and choice as possible related to education and training, careers, and service delivery options, while offering customers the opportunity to receive both skill-development and job placement services.
- Provide career services that motivate, support and empower customers, including individuals with disabilities and individuals with LEP, to make informed decisions based on local and regional economic demand and effectively attain their personal employment and education goals.
- Value skill development by assessing and creating opportunities for improving each individual's basic, occupational, and employability skills.

WIOA was passed in part to increase access to our workforce services. A particular focus for increased access is individuals with barriers to employment, a group that includes members of the following populations:

- Individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to individuals with vision loss
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals age 55 and older
- Returning citizens
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster system
- Individuals with LEP
- Individuals who have low levels of literacy
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Single parents, including single pregnant women
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act.

UI Eligibility Issues and Referrals for Adjudication

Iowa continues to incorporate Unemployment Insurance services in the One Stop locations. Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Division regularly provides UI training at basic and advanced levels. Staff from field offices attend these classes as local management determines necessary and provides in-service training to One-Stop Center staff when appropriate. Each of the local One Stop and satellite offices have staff trained in recognizing and referring UI eligibility issues for adjudication. During these training sessions, local staff are encouraged to proactively identify and provide assistance to identified individuals on a case by case basis.

In addition, Iowa participates in the RESEA program which provides additional opportunities for addressing UI concerns while connecting customers with employment services.

The Partners agree that increased access to the State's workforce services—particularly for individuals with barriers to employment—must be a priority as they work together to deliver workforce services under WIOA. This necessarily includes outreach to individuals with barriers to employment. To achieve the priority of increased access for individuals with barriers to employment, the Partners will leverage the expert knowledge of its membership and collaborate to maximize access to workforce services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment.

c. Describe the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Reemployment Assistance

Profiling is the process used to select claimants for Reemployment Services (RES). Profiling is done within the first five weeks of an unemployment insurance (UI) claim. RES looks at a variety of factors such as previous occupation, previous industry, education, duration of employment, wages, etc. If selected, participation is mandatory as it is a condition of eligibility for UI benefits. Participants will receive a letter outlining which program they have been selected to participate in, where to report and what documents they need to bring.

Programs may include:

- Reemployment Orientation Workshop
- Reemployment Eligibility Assessment
- Emergency Unemployment Compensation Audit
- National Career Readiness Certificate testing

All of these services are designed to assure claimants are fully registered for work through Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and to provide customized reemployment services. Some examples of reemployment services include:

- assistance completing online applications
- résumé writing
- cover letters
- interview preparation

Participants seeking only information are not treated as participants and their self-service or informational search requires no registration. When an individual seeks more than minimal assistance from staff in taking the next step towards self-sufficient employment, the person must be registered and eligibility must be determined.

Recent studies completed by the U.S. Department of Labor found that people who received reemployment services returned to work earlier than people who did not receive services. Contact your local IowaWORKS Center for additional information. The Adult training program is designed to prepare adults for participation in the labor force by increasing their occupational and educational skills, resulting in improved attainment of self-sustaining employment. Low-income adults who have limited skills, lack work experience, and face other barriers to economic success are the primary beneficiaries.

The Dislocated Workers program provides retraining and re-employment services to individuals who have been dislocated from their jobs, and to displaced homemakers. Job seekers have access to computerized resource centers for career exploration, resume preparation, skills assessment and testing, job search, on-line work registration, and on-line unemployment insurance claims filing. Job seekers also have access to a variety of skill building workshops, job search assistance curriculum and individualized career services.

The Program Year 2014 (PY14) Dislocated Worker Entered Employment rate was 69.1%. The target rate for program year 2014 was 70% - within the minimum target rate

of 80% of the negotiated goal of 56%. Dislocated Worker Entered Employment accounts for individuals who were not employed at date of participation, the percent employed in the 1st quarter after exit quarter.

Promoting Independence & Self-Sufficiency through Employment, Job Opportunities, and Basic Skills (PROMISE JOBS) targets Family Investment Program (FIP) participants and provides employment & training services that include supportive services to address barriers to employment and work readiness services to increase opportunities for employment outcomes. This includes overarching activities such as education, certification, training, job search assistance, and employment.

Iowa's Rapid Response targets workers who are displaced due to a lack of work through no fault of their own from firms hurt by foreign trade, as certified by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) - Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance (OTAA). Rapid Response is a proactive, business-focused, and flexible strategy designed for two major purposes:

Assisting growing companies access an available pool of skilled workers from other companies that are downsizing or who have been trained in the skills Iowa companies need to be competitive and

Responding to layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers.

Trade Act Assistance targets workers who are displaced due to a lack of work through no fault of their own from firms hurt by foreign trade, as certified by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). This federally funded employment and training program provides benefits to individuals displaced from their jobs due to foreign competition and jobs that are lost because the work activity was either moved out of the U.S. or as a direct result of foreign imports. IWD staff conduct informational meetings for the workers of the closing organizations and coordinate registered apprenticeship efforts and the classroom training benefit which involves individual class schedules, tuition payment, and student reimbursements for travel, childcare, books, and other approved costs.

National Dislocated Worker Grants target Dislocated Workers. Iowa currently has two National Emergency Grants (NEG) for Dislocated Workers. The Iowa Jobs Driven NEG provides Registered Apprenticeship Training for Iowa's top in-demand occupations.

The Sector Partnership NEG provides support for the development and coordination of sector partnerships in regions impacted by the Avian Flu epidemic by targeting three in-demand sectors. The three primary sectors which are targeted include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare & transportation and logistics.

d. Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate, including the following:

1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

State Use of W-P Funds to Support UI Claimants

UI staff in IowaWORKS Centers have access to the labor exchange system for job listings and referrals, as well as Labor Market Information on the agency's website. All UI benefit claimants who do not have an active attachment to a job or industry are required to register for work through the UI application process or the state's job bank or at the nearest IowaWORKS Center. Each of the 15 integrated one-stop centers and four satellite offices has a resource area for UI claimants/job seekers to access job opportunities, employment trends, occupational information, education providers and programs, self-directed career exploration and assessment tools, financial aid information, online filing of initial UI claims and weekly continued claims, as well as access to telephones, fax machines and copiers.

Services provided to job seeker, including UI claimants, include:

- Self-service resources, including labor exchange services, unemployment claims
- Access to computers
- Resume development
- Access to job openings within Iowa and within 50 miles of our borders, as well as nationwide
- Labor Market Information for career explorations, in-demand career fields, average salaries, etc.
- Training and education resources
- Financial aid options
- Vocational assessment
- Automated job referrals
- Workshops on employment related topics
- Job search assistance and referral
- Specialized assistance for veterans, other eligible individuals, and migrant seasonal farm workers
- Assistance for ex-offenders
- Assistance with federal bonding
- Referral to partner and community provider services

2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

Registration of UI Claimants

Iowa Code 96.4(1) requires all UI claimants register for work with Employment Services. The process is fully integrated into the UI Claim application process, as well as can be completed on the state's job bank, IowaJobs.org, or at the nearest IowaWORKS Center. Registration must be completed within ten days of filing the initial claim. Failure to complete a registration could result in denial of benefits.

The work registration requirement for claimants who are not work attached will be considered valid when, at a minimum, the following information is provided by the claimant:

- Name

- Mailing Address
- Email Address
- 1 desired job title (O*NET code)
- Education
- Most recent employer or experience, including internships, volunteer work, or military, with minimum 20-word job description
- IowaJobs.org account must be active
- IowaJobs.org account must be searchable
- Job Alerts must be selected

3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Administration of the Work Test

All claimants no longer attached to an employer must be able to work, available to work, and is earnestly and actively seeking employment.

To meet the preliminary eligibility requirements, an individual must:

- be totally or partially unemployed
- have worked and earned a certain amount of wages in work covered by UI in the last 15 to 18 months
- have lost their job through no fault of their own
- be able to work and available for work

To remain eligible for UI benefits, an individual must:

- be actively seeking work (work search may be waived if certain criteria are met)
- be registered for work with IWD (unless waived) at the nearest IowaWORKS center or online at www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov
- keep a record of all work search contacts and be ready to provide a copy if requested
- notify IWD of any refused job offers or referrals on the weekly continued claim
- report if they quit or are discharged from any job while claiming UI benefits
- notify IWD if they move or leave the area for more than three consecutive working days
- report all wages (whether holiday, vacation, severance, part-time or any other form of payment) when they are earned, not when payment is received
- contact IWD if workers' compensation, private pension or any other type of pay is received
- notify IWD if they enroll in or start school

Continued Eligibility Work Search Requirements

Unless waived by IWD, individuals are required to make a minimum of two job contacts each week. The work search requirement may be waived if an individual is temporarily unemployed and expects to be recalled by their former employer within a reasonable period of time or is approved for Department Approved Training (DAT). The work search requirement will be determined each time a claim is filed.

In order to meet the work search requirements, individuals must make two job contacts between Sunday and Saturday of the week they are claiming benefits. Contacts may be made in person, online, by mail or faxing résumés or applications. Telephone calls are not acceptable. The work search must be a reasonable and honest effort to find suitable work. Individuals must be willing to accept a reasonable wage for the job for which they are applying. An individual may not apply for the same position with the same employer more than once every six weeks.

Individuals must keep a written record of all work search contacts and be ready to provide a copy if requested by IWD. Failure to comply may result in denial of benefits. The information needs to include:

- Date of the contact
- Company name, address and phone number
- Contact name

Method and results of contact IWD recommends using the form provided at the back of this book. Members of a union hiring hall are required to be in good standing and must contact the union in accordance to hall rules.

Ability to Work and Availability for Work Individuals must be able and available for work while claiming benefits. It is important to notify IWD of any condition or situation which would prevent an individual from working, accepting work, or looking for work. These situations include, but are not limited to:

- illness, injury, or hospitalization
- being in jail
- attending school
- being on vacation or out of town
- no childcare
- no transportation

Individuals are notified of how to report any changes that could affect their benefits.

4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

Referrals

IowaWORKS integrated service delivery system provides participants assistance with skills development and employment services programs. Staff provide information to customers on community resources, Labor Market Information, HiSET (high school equivalency program), occupational training, on-the-job training and support services.

Staff identify customers' needs, assist with unemployment insurance, employment and reemployment assistance, trade services, workshops and training.

e. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include--

1. Assessment of Need

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

Iowa's Farm Labor Workforce

Seasonal Farmworker - individuals who during the past 12 months is or was employed in farm work of a seasonal or other temporary nature and is not required to be absent overnight from their permanent place of residence.

Migrant Farmworker - a seasonal farmworker (defined above) who travels to the job site and who are not reasonably able to return to their permanent residence within the same day.

Migrant Food Processors - See Migrant Farmworker

Intrastate Migrant Farmworkers - farmworkers who follow migrant stream within our state. These workers usually migrate throughout Iowa's significant areas/counties of agricultural production. For example, these farmworkers will migrate from northeastern counties to southeastern counties and from north central counties to northwestern counties and so forth.

Interstate Migrant Farmworkers - individuals who follow migrant stream within our state but that are coming from other states. Most of these farmworkers migrate from Texas, Georgia, Florida, and California

Foreign Labor Certified Farmworkers - nonimmigrant foreign workers with temporary H2A visas authorized to work in the U.S. on a seasonal basis; workers must comply with special terms and conditions.

This plan provides guidance on Iowa's strategy for meeting program compliance requirements to adequately serve targeted MSFW population through assessment of need, implementation of effective and culturally specific outreach activities, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

A. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic,

natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.

Projected Agricultural Activity

Based on information provided by LMI, employers are noticing a decline in the number of farmworkers willing to migrate for seasonal opportunities. One of the reasons for the decline in available workers are the younger populations are not as interested in migrating long distances as were their previous generations. Many opt to stay closer to their permanent residence in southern states where climates allow for more year round farming opportunities. Older generations are leaving the employment realm and being supported by their younger generations who are not entering the farming industry at the levels their parents and previous generations once did. As a result, there is a shortage of available migrant and season workers who are current U.S. Citizens.

Some employers are turning to employment through the H2A Visa program to fill the void. Based on conversations conducted with employers who are exploring the H2A employment option, it is anticipated that future requests will increase compared to Iowa's current level (88) during FFY15.

The calendar of harvest remains the same for the upcoming year thus a need for seasonal and migrant workers will exist to meet the planting, growing and harvesting needs of Iowa's agricultural employers. It is projected that the need will exceed PY14 opportunities in Iowa. Current projections, derived from meetings with agricultural employers, project the need to be around 11,400 in PY15. Many of these opportunities will be filled through Foreign Labor Certification.

B. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

MSFW Needs Assessment Summary

In the previous section, **VI-WP (1)(a)**, the unique needs of Iowa's MSFW were summarized, but the following section goes into detail as to what those specific needs are and how Iowa plans to address them in the coming months. Potential solutions and ideas for moving Iowa's MSFW program forward are addressed in this section.

Assistance with Immigration Paperwork and Vital Documents

Each year, Outreach Specialists bring forms and applications for families and individuals who are at various stages in the immigration process and as they venture out for work, critical appointments with the immigration office are needed to move the process forward. Home addresses are needed to be changed and then changed again. In years past

Outreach Specialists have organized citizenship classes at labor camps to prepare and assist the MSFW population in this complex process.

An understanding of, and access to, personal identification processes are often needs of the MSFW population as well. Driver's licenses are needed for workers to legally drive employer vehicles, with some requiring as much as CDL certification. Having an Iowa ID for banking purposes is also a need for some MSFW.

Language Barriers

MSFW lack English language skills. One-Stop Center staff and outreach specialists have noted that almost every client who identifies as a migrant or seasonal farmworker experiences communication barriers. Some MSFW will bring in a family member such as a younger child to serve as an interpreter to enhance communication with staff. Most of these individuals are within the 25- to 60-year age range. Interpretation and translation services are limited and promoting English as a Second Language (ESL) more within these populations is helpful. Iowa's workforce services agency currently has several bilingual, Spanish-only, advisors on staff in the Des Moines office, but the need for such services exists widely throughout the rest of rural Iowa. Outreach Specialists and other potential supports lack the necessary basic multi-lingual skills that would enhance services to Iowa's MSFW communities.

Information

Each year, many workers ask the same questions about the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system. In their home state, they go to the office and they complete an application for unemployment benefits. Many of these workers are unable to write or read in their own native languages, so applying for UI benefits is too complicated in Iowa which requires the use of a computer and a command of the English language.

Outreach specialists request UI staff in One-Stop Centers provide presentations to answer and clarify questions or misunderstanding about the UI process, the same way that tax issues are clarified to MSFW by other agencies.

Providing timely and accurate Labor Market Information in order to achieve continuous employment for workers also has been noted as significant needs across Iowa.

Information relating to labor laws, workers' rights, employment authorization questions, and the Migrant Seasonal Worker Protection Act (MSPA) are needed across the state in multiple languages, in accessible formats and distributed broadly to ensure MSFW are getting the information they need.

Health Issues

Limited access to medical, public health, and preventative care services has consequences, especially among these isolated populations. New and older workers come unprepared to face the daunting work in the fields and can lead to the need for medical care. Pregnant women also need assistance as they expose themselves to extreme heat and other field conditions.

A lack of access to adequately healthy and nutritious foods and lifestyle choices are unfortunately a consequence of this type of work and associated lifestyle. The dichotomy of the MSFW populations who bring food to America's tables but are not able to eat nutritious meals is a reality needing to be addressed as well.

Job Opportunities and Up-Skilling

Lack of working-term employment opportunities is an emergent need of younger MSFW populations. Although most of these workers come every year to work in agriculture, many of them only have this type of employment during the year. Migrant workers come to Iowa year after, but in the last few years, many of the younger generations desire to stay in Iowa, wanting a chance at more stable, long-term employment. Some have demonstrated an interest in starting their own or a family-run business.

Occupational training and upskilling have become needs of the MSFW population as agriculture becomes more technologically advanced. In order for MSFW to maintain or transition into a new occupation or industry, new skills or training is often a significant need.

Housing and Rental Assistance

Migrant camps or local motel/housing that barely meet the minimal standards are a problem. Often times outreach staff have no access or ability to inspect living facilities. MSFW outreach specialists should have access to MSFW housing, to at least assist the Iowa Department of Public Health (DPH) with their inspections (currently not being done for a lack of DPH staff). Placement in substandard living conditions, affordable housing and/or financial support to access improved housing is often noted by MSFW.

Mistreatment

Mistreatment by the farm labor contractor or crew leader happens in this line of work. Although there are significantly fewer cases than years past, outreach specialists still find farmworkers are mistreated by their FLC or crew leaders. In some cases, workers have been left behind after an emergency evacuation, such as a weather related event. Mistreatment can include sexual harassment, sexual violence, verbal abuse, and anger. More serious violations include MSPA regulations such as no fresh water, not enough breaks, or inadequate shade during extreme heat. Pregnant women may not be allowed enough breaks or visits to the restroom, not getting paid, or discrepancies in hours between what workers have registered and what the crew leader says they worked.

Education

There is a significant need for educational resources that focus on this population. While workshops for the general public are offered in most offices, as well as at some public libraries, Spanish-language workshops are not offered. Most of the individuals in this population do not have a resume and don't understand the importance of a resume in today's job market. Most of Iowa's MSFW typically have a lower than average education, with many not having completed high school or earning a GED or HiSET certificate. Although Iowa's One-Stop Centers market career development, HiSET and ESL resources to everyone who walks in the door, the MSFW population is less likely to

take advantage of those resources. Additionally, navigating the educational system for MSFW children can be very complex.

Social Isolation and Chronic Poverty

Due to the inherent isolation among this population, many issues arise such as lack of transportation and all that results from decreased mobility. Many MSFW cannot independently seek employment or supportive services even if they wanted to and /or knew how or where to go for such services. Childcare is a noted need of many MSFW families, but is difficult to secure, afford and access within the isolated MSFW communities.

Most MSFW populations are living at or near the poverty line and also may be considered to be “underemployed” and local agencies may not be doing enough to target individuals that are underemployed. Currently, efforts and resources are focused primarily on individuals who are chronically unemployed.

Food Assistance

Many of Iowa’s MSFW families come to Iowa with nothing but the money for gas to get here or have spent their financial resources on their way here. Many of them request applications for food stamps, information about food pantries, or alternate food sources.

Safety Concerns

There are risks inherent within the agricultural industry pertaining to physical health and safety. Exposure to nature’s unpredictable events, such as tornadoes and natural disasters are also safety factors effecting Iowa’s MSFW population. Studies consistently show the MSFW population is at an increased risk for domestic violence, sexual abuse/harassment and for human trafficking. There are statewide agencies in Iowa that specifically serve these specific populations such as the Attorney General’s office, the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, etc. and work is being done to reach out to these agencies to develop plans and implement procedures to identify and assist these specialized populations which are at an even greater risk of harm.

To our knowledge, IWD outreach specialists and their team are the only representatives who conduct outreach to the MSFW population. Many of the MSFW population build their lives around their seasonal work and they expect to be laid off; they understand they have a high chance of returning to work within the next six months, once the harvesting or planting season begins, and many travel around from state to state, with few actually taking up residence in Iowa, making providing outreach services especially difficult.

In general, most of the MSFW population is not familiar with local schools, doctors, or programs that they could use to better their skills, health and education. Increasingly, computer and technology skills are needed to navigate legal and other state systems, and the MSFW population simply doesn’t have these types of skills or necessary equipment such as computers. Moreover, the majority of MSFW workers simply do not have the time or meaningful availability to be able to access the many opportunities which may exist in their local area. The many programs, such as English as Second Language, safety programs, trainings, better job opportunities to improve their skills, may not be getting to those who need them most. Most MSFW populations are living at or near the poverty line

and they also may be considered to be “underemployed.” Local agencies may not be doing enough to target individuals who are underemployed. Currently, efforts and resources are focused primarily on individuals who are chronically unemployed.

2. Outreach Activities

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

Outreach Activities

Iowa’s outreach specialists will continue to reach out to agriculture employers and meet with MSFW to offer and provide workforce services. Outreach specialists will utilize the Workforce System resources to reach out to those workers who do not have the means to visit a local One-Stop center in order to receive workforce services. Resources the outreach specialists currently have access to include: database on agricultural employers and FLCs; Agricultural Recruitment System, local one-stop center staff meetings; Iowa’s labor exchange system, IWorks; partnership opportunities with National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee, Proteus, and the Iowa Department of Education MSFW Youth Education program; community resource connections; and the H2A data bank.

Active Database of Agricultural Employers and FLCs. Each outreach specialist is responsible for updating Iowa’s employer/FLC statewide database. This tool provides information on the current and projected hiring needs of agricultural employers and FLCs in order to better assist those workers seeking opportunities with employers needing a workforce.

Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS): Each outreach specialist and one-stop center will use the Agricultural Recruitment System as recruitment and referral tool that allows for the orderly movement of seasonal agricultural workers within the state, region, and country. This tool assists agricultural employers in meeting their temporary and seasonal labor needs by matching farmworkers with agricultural jobs. This system requires specific assurances and information in the Agricultural Clearance Orders in order to make appropriate referrals.

Attend One-Stop Center Staff Meetings. Outreach specialists attend local staff meetings in the one-stop centers within the Service Delivery District each are assigned. These are information sharing events of resources available at One-Stop locations and workforce system partners. This information is shared with the farmworkers and agricultural employers. Outreach specialists have access to a calendar of events related to job fairs, workshop offerings, credentialing opportunities, and other center workforce offerings. Outreach specialists keep one-stop center staff informed on farmworker and agricultural employer needs in order for center staff to assist during peak season events and to ensure appropriate referrals to supportive services are provided.

Labor Exchange System, IWorks. Outreach Specialists utilize the labor exchange system to create worker profiles to provide targeted service information and employment offerings, make referrals to supportive service entities, and identify credentialing opportunities for farmworkers. Outreach Specialists will also update employer profiles to

keep One-Stop Business Service staff aware of contacts made and services being provided to reduce duplication of efforts.

Partnership Opportunities with NFJP Grantee and Iowa Department of Education.

Outreach Specialists have established partnerships with the NFJP grantee, Proteus, and frequently conduct co-outreach activities; keep communication open to ensure invitations to all on-boarding events are represented by both entities, and regularly attend outreach meetings that include several local community and agency representatives. Over the past fiscal year, Outreach Specialists partnered with the Iowa Department of Education to locate students in primary and secondary education levels who may be traveling with their families. The initiative is to keep students from losing education coursework and credits which may prolong or prevent them from obtaining their high school diploma or equivalent. Outreach Specialists conducted co-outreach efforts with the recruitment coordinators to further encourage educational credentialing specifically related to basic education.

Community Resource Connections. Each of the Outreach Specialists have access to a database of local community resource connections in their assigned areas. These local advocacy groups, charity organizations, faith-based organizations and other entities provide assistance with supportive services to farmworkers when they arrive, during their stay, and help them prepare for departure. Many migrant farmworkers arrive in Iowa without the basic essentials, such as transportation, food, weather appropriate clothing, and little, if any, family connections. For those farmworkers desiring to make Iowa their permanent residence, the community resources assist with locating housing, schooling for children while they work and partner with One-Stop Centers to identify long-term employment opportunities.

H-2A Requests. Several agricultural employers utilize the H-2A Foreign Labor Certification process to bring farmworkers to Iowa to assist with the farm work related employment opportunities. The Outreach specialists conduct the pre-occupancy housing inspections to ensure workers arriving have safe living arrangements. Iowa is in the process of creating a Housing Handbook for employers who provide housing to the migrant and H-2A farmworkers. Most FLCs utilizing the H-2A program have a diverse mix of H-2A Visa workers, migrant workers from other states, and current seasonal workers currently residing in Iowa. Regardless of where the farmworkers' primary residence is, the Outreach Specialists provide information on worker rights and the complaint system.

A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

Reaching Farmworkers

Iowa Workforce Development serves the agricultural community through its outreach program designed to contact MSFW who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted at one-stop centers.

Through a targeted approach, Iowa outreach specialists have increased their focus on referrals of farmworkers to Workforce Services provided at the local one-stop locations. Outreach specialists are actively working with agricultural employers to identify

permanent employment opportunities and encourage employers to consider employing workers they have hired on a seasonal basis who desire to make Iowa their permanent home.

Iowa plans to continue strengthening cooperative partnerships with National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee, Proteus, and the Iowa Department of Education to conduct outreach activities to enhance the service offerings to MSFW.

Accessibility

The State of Iowa is committed to providing programs and services in a readily accessible format and delivery method. Accessibility encompasses a variety of ideas, actions, and high-level collaboration. A range of barriers exist for a diversity of populations. System-level barriers such as exclusionary hiring practices and a lack of employer supports, to geographic hindrances and other location-based obstacles are inherent within the workforce delivery system. This is particularly true for Iowa's MSFW population. Individuals living in Iowa's rural communities experience higher levels of isolation, have limited access to available and affordable transportation, are not offered the same educational and training opportunities, and often lack personal and professional support networks as well as essential services. Adding to the mix is the job seeker's ability to gain skills due to other real and perceived restrictions.

Recognizing the variety of barriers and restrictions imposed upon job seekers and workers, the State of Iowa is committed to engaging and supporting ALL workers, regardless of language skills, age, location, ability, legal history, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, or socio-economic background.

Access may require reasonable accommodations, natural and programmatic supports, intensive services, and creative methods to address the actual or perceived impediment toward meaningful access. Any individual seeking services from the workforce system will receive the appropriate, reasonable, and needed accommodation or support. All goals, strategies and actions inherently infuse options for accommodations and accessibility such that all Iowans may be provided the necessary supports to be successful in achieving their employment goal. The plan goals, strategies and activities presume and require all core partners to provide the necessary services, support, modification or accommodation for ALL Iowans to be successful. All entities responsible for Iowa's workforce services delivery system will work together to support and encourage a fully accessible and accommodated workforce system that works for ALL Iowans. For the MSFW community, this also means that Iowa's one-stop center staff and outreach specialist will be reviewing existing policies and developing new policies which will include innovative outreach strategies to reach Iowa's MSFW populations where they are rather than counting on workers to come in to the one-stop center, which oftentimes isn't a viable option. Activities to support accessibility strategies will include the ongoing identification, and proactive reduction of barriers to employment for ALL Iowans. Workforce System Partners will develop policies and implement procedures to ensure continuing and unhindered access to Iowa jobs for ALL Iowans.

Iowa's Core Partners have plans to develop a handbook that highlights best practices which will serve as a guide for implementing the highest of standards and proven

methods in one-stop service delivery. This handbook will contain a section specific to best serving the needs of Iowa's Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. Environmental, programmatic and technological accessibility of the one-stop centers will be the centerpiece of the policies and procedures which are yet to be fully developed.

One-Stop System Design

Offering accessible formats and delivery methods, recognizing and addressing variety of barriers and restrictions to individuals, technology and increasing technology, flexibility in scheduling, supportive services, and professional staff development will increase awareness and utilization.

Youth Services

Youth services is focused on system and other partner consideration, working to address the variety of barriers and restrictions, understanding accessibility and finding ways to delivery services.

The one-stop delivery system will address accessibility for Individuals who are English language learners by identifying and attempting to bridge the barriers faced in accessing and maintaining usage of the services provided by core partners. Barriers to obtaining and maintaining services from core partners include but are not limited to transportation, awareness and understanding of services, language barriers, and familiarity with culture and civic education. The obstacles faced by English language learners when accessing the one-stop delivery system can be minimized by implementing the following:

- Creation of an inclusive environment for Iowa's one-stop system through deliberate diversity and cultural awareness training;
- Provision of culturally relevant and translated materials throughout the one-stop system;
- Collaboration with additional locally-based partners who can assist with identification and enhanced reduction of barriers;
- Interweaving of civic education in training offered to core partners and one-stop system staff;
- Development of a cadre of diversity trainers and translators for core partner agencies; and
- Incorporation of accessibility for English language learners in the one-stop system certification process to improve how services are delivered to English language learners.

Outreach staff will continue to partner with the Iowa Department of Education to identify youth to assist with educational needs and with the National Farmworkers Job Placement grantee, Proteus, to identify adult farmworkers desiring to increase credentialing. In addition, outreach specialists will make referrals to assist with social service support needs, and work with Workforce System partners to address identified barriers. Outreach specialists will make concerted efforts to meet with farmworkers in locations where they gather, work, reside, or attend community events in order to build rapport with MSFW community leaders and solidify relationships among local partners serving MSFW populations.

B. Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Technical Assistance

Regular Trainings to Outreach Workers

All Outreach staff will receive twice annual training on services to employers and jobseekers, including, but not limited to, the Employment-related Law Complaint System, Sexual Harassment, Agricultural Recruitment System and Housing Inspections. New staff will have access to online training modules and in-person training. The outreach program is further supported by a full-time State Monitor Advocate position.

Additionally, technical assistance is offered to all one-stop centers for the Employment-related Law Complaint System, housing inspections, Agricultural Recruitment System and MSFW application and services.

Conferences for Outreach Workers

Outreach specialists are encouraged to attend the annual National Farmworker Conference (MAFO), which focuses on farm worker rights and laws, and regional training provided by U.S. Department of Labor Region 5 staff.

Additional Resources for Outreach Workers

Outreach specialists have access to online MSFW training on Workforce GPS, ability to attend U.S. DOL ETA, Wage and Hour and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission webinars, as well as access to information provided by Iowa Legal Aid and Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Increased Collaborations

Iowa continues to collaborate with other agencies, and will partner with other MSFW service agencies to provide training and technical services. The SWA also requests presentations at training sessions from service provider agencies. Agencies Iowa will continue to collaborate and partner with include, but are not limited to, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Legal Aid, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa State University Extension Service, schools, local law enforcement agencies, as well as other state, local and faith-based organizations. These agencies provide information on farm worker rights and laws that are changing or currently in effect for farm worker protection.

Employment Service Complaint System

All outreach staff will receive twice annual training on services to employers and jobseekers, including, but not limited to, the Employment-related Law Complaint

System. New staff will have access to online training modules and in-person training. Further support is provided by a full-time State Monitor Advocate position.

Additionally, technical assistance is offered to all one-stop centers for the Employment-related Law Complaint System.

C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

Increasing Outreach Worker Training and Awareness

Iowa needs to be fully staffed with four (4) outreach specialists and one (1) State Monitor Advocate in order to meet the demands of the workers and employers. Moving to a District Service Delivery approach for outreach coverage should assist in reducing the coverage area for each outreach specialist so they can provide for greater service delivery and reduce the amount of time traveling. This along with other options, will be considered as Iowa works to improve its agricultural outreach planning efforts. Other entities and stakeholders will be engaged as part of this ongoing process. Continuing to increase our communication, coordination, and utilization of our Workforce System partners will provide additional staff support when conducting outreach activities to workers and employers.

As part of the Unified State Planning process, partner cross training at one-stop centers will be required. This will assist in providing the support and knowledge outreach specialists need to better fulfill their job duties. Other areas of increased alignment will also be reviewed and implemented.

D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Professional Development Activities

Attendance at One-Stop Center Staff Meetings. Outreach specialists attend local staff meetings in the offices within their assigned Service Delivery District. These are information sharing events of resources available at one-stop locations and Workforce System partners. This information is shared with the farmworkers and agricultural employers. Each outreach specialist has access to calendar of events related to job fairs, workshop offerings, credentialing opportunities, and other center workforce offerings. Outreach specialists keep one-stop center staff informed on farmworker and agricultural employer needs in order for center staff to assist during peak season events and to ensure appropriate referrals to supportive services are provided.

During PY2015, Iowa experienced vacancies in outreach specialist and State Monitor Advocate positions, reducing the level of services offered. There will be an increased effort toward examining why Iowa has experienced such turnovers and a plan for increasing retention, which includes increased support and training for outreach specialists.

E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

Coordinating Outreach Efforts

Partnership opportunities with NFJP grantee and Iowa Department of Education.

Outreach specialists have established partnerships with the NFJP grantee, Proteus, and frequently conduct co-outreach activities; keep communication open to ensure invitations to all on-boarding events are represented by both entities, and regularly attend outreach meetings that include several local community and agency representatives. Over the past fiscal year, outreach specialists partnered with the Iowa Department of Education to identify students in primary and secondary education levels who may be traveling with their families. The initiative is to keep students from losing education coursework and credits which may prolong, or prevent, them from obtaining their high school diploma or equivalent. Outreach specialists conducted co-outreach efforts with the recruitment coordinators to further encourage educational credentialing specifically related to basic education.

Community resource connections. Each outreach specialist has a database of local community resource connections in their assigned areas. These local advocacy groups, charity organizations, faith-based organizations and other entities provide assistance with supportive services to farmworkers when they arrive, during their stay, and help them prepare for departure. Many migrant farmworkers arrive in Iowa without the basic essentials such as transportation, food, weather appropriate clothing, and little, if any, family connections. For those farmworkers desiring to make Iowa their permanent residence, the community resources assist with locating housing and schooling for children, while the outreach specialists will work with partners in the one-stop centers to identify long-term employment opportunities.

H-2A requests. Several agricultural employers utilize the H-2A Foreign Labor Certification process to bring farmworkers to Iowa to assist with the farm work related employment opportunities. The outreach specialists conduct the pre-occupancy housing inspections to ensure workers have safe living arrangements. Iowa is in the process of creating a housing handbook for employers who provide housing to migrant. Most FLCs utilizing the H-2A program have a diverse mix of H-2A visa workers, migrant workers from other states, and current seasonal workers residing in Iowa. Regardless of where the farmworkers' primary residence is, the outreach specialists provide information on worker rights and the complaint system.

Outreach specialists will continue to engage agricultural employers to identify and address hiring needs of seasonal and permanent positions. Strategies that will be further developed include engaging agricultural employers, in partnership with WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and local advocacy group partners, to increase the use of MSFW as a pool of available labor for permanent employment opportunities specifically in transportation, which is a high-demand, high-wage occupation in many areas of the state. Utilizing local WIOA staff and NFJP grantee staff to assist in certificate training for truck driving, some agricultural employers cover the cost of coursework, and then hire the MSFW on a permanent basis. The MSFW program in Iowa plans to increase these types of collaborative efforts with agricultural employers in all areas of the state. Each of the

outreach specialists will continue to work with agricultural employers in their Service Delivery District to identify skill demands in order to bridge the connection to a diverse workforce population.

Integration

Iowa operates under an Integrated Service Delivery model to ensure all customers are offered a comprehensive blend of services designed to jointly place them into full-time, non-seasonal employment or upgraded agricultural employment. The one-stop centers are heavily engaged in a number of job services activities including the recruitment efforts of domestic workers to H-2A vacancies by utilizing resources available that are either group-focused or individual, in printed and electronic format, and are presented in a variety of service delivery formats:

- Sending IWorks emails that enable center staff to create and send formatted e-mails to job seekers who are registered in IWorks (Iowa's labor exchange system) including job opportunities and targeted recruitment e-mails;
- Performing various recruitment activities, including outreach to find and refer qualified domestic workers to fill H-2A job openings; and
- Assisting with resume searches and center staff assisted services that encourage agricultural employers to list their job openings on the state's labor exchange system to fill their job openings locally and/or through the H-2A program, if necessary.

3. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;**
- ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.**

Serving Employers and MSFW through the One-Stop Center

Iowa's MSFW outreach specialists coordinate outreach efforts to farmworkers, agricultural employers and community advocacy groups with the National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee, Proteus; the Iowa Department of Education, Title 1 program; Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Economic and Community Development program; IowaWORKS Business Services Representatives, and WIOA program managers.

This MSFW statewide team is focused on increasing outreach efforts to each entity with common and shared target populations who seek workforce, training, education, and community resources. As a result of this coordination of efforts, this group of state program managers meet at least quarterly to identify methods and resources to assist shared target population group with the services offered and reduce duplication of services provided.

Each partner has a peak season that may vary or coincide with each other which increases efforts to ensure adequate referrals and penetration to identify farmworkers and agricultural businesses in need of specific services. Iowa will continue to conduct co-outreach efforts with our Workforce System partners and increase identification of additional partners as the needs of farmworkers and agricultural employers evolve and change.

Workforce System Services

Outreach specialists and Workforce System outreach team members will provide agricultural employers information on the services available to them including:

- Assistance to generate IWorks emails that enable each center staff to create and send formatted emails to job seekers who are registered in IWorks including job opportunities, and targeted recruitment trainings;
- Perform recruitment activities to find and refer qualified migrant and seasonal farmworkers to fill the labor needs of agricultural employers;
- Providing information about the benefits of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).
- Assist with resume searches and on-site-staff assisted services that encourage agricultural employers to list and fill their job openings using IWorks/IowaJobs.org;
- Provide labor market information data such as supply and demand, salaries, training requirements, new and emerging occupations, and industry growth;
- Provide Rapid Response services due to plant closure or mass layoffs. These services are offered to workers at the employer's job site and include information on assistance that can be provided at the One-Stop Center.
- A more personalized employer service approach;
- Assistance with pre-occupancy inspections for those agricultural employers requesting participation in the inter/intrastate recruitment system and/or H-2A Foreign Labor Certification;
- Assistance with targeted recruitment, best practices to locate farmworker pools;
- Assistance to Farm Labor Contractors to meet U.S. Department of Labor complaints and regulations;
- Workshops tailored to agricultural employers' need;
- Information on business tax credits available to employers hiring workers meeting defined targeted population groups with barriers to employment;
- Assistance with internet website links;
- Assistance with informal, timely, and appropriate resolutions of complaints and apparent violations;
- Assistance with information on employment training programs;

- Assistance with information on basic education, literacy, and limited English language services to workers, workers' families, and employers;
- Assistance with new approaches on agricultural ventures in areas not previously identified as agriculturally active, such as immigrants' and refugees' agricultural backgrounds, co-farm tenants, farmland rentals and the incorporation of new produce that these immigrants used to harvest in their own countries.

Outreach specialists and Workforce System business services teams provide services to employers on an individual, as needed basis to address their hiring and employment needs. These services are in addition to the IWorks electronic job listing system.

B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

Employment Service Complaint System

Each one-stop center prominently displays the posters provided by ETA. The State Monitor Advocate and Program Manager conduct training sessions with Workforce System partners to keep the staff abreast on the complaint process. The Complaint System is a topic of discussion with the MSFW statewide team to identify methods for outreach to employers and farmworkers to increase awareness.

During farmworker on-boarding and orientation events, outreach specialists and legal aid groups provide materials outlining the Complaint System process and conduct question & answer sessions about the Complaint System. During field visits, agricultural employer focus group meetings and Farm Labor Contractor meetings, outreach specialists explain the process of the Complaint System, how it affects employers, and areas where informal resolutions can be identified.

Farmworker Rights

Outreach specialists provide the Wage and Hour Division "Farmworker Rights" pocket reference guide, printed in both English and Spanish, to agricultural workers they contact during formal and informal meetings. Outreach specialists also provide Migrant and Seasonal Protection Act (MSPA) fact sheets and posters for employers to display where workers congregate during working hours. This will be one of the first items the State Monitor Advocate looks for when conducting Field Visits, Field Checks and pre-occupancy housing inspections for the H-2A program. The outreach specialists provide their contact information, along with the SMA's, when conducting outreach to farmworkers, so they have an immediate means of reaching out for assistance.

C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Agricultural Recruitment System

Iowa's State Monitor Advocate provides training to outreach specialists, one-stop center management, and one-stop staff on the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS).

Services to agricultural employers are provided by MSFW outreach specialists and other one-stop center staff through in-person meetings and telephone contacts with employers.

Employers are apprised of all services available through the workforce system to include the ARS, job orders, file searches and other services as needed.

Iowa provides services to agricultural employers by effectively providing information about services available through the workforce development system and obtain sufficient information about the employer's needs to provide appropriate services. Outreach specialists will continue to conduct meetings with large agricultural employers to facilitate the exchange of information and maximize the effectiveness of the program. Staff promote the use of the one-stop centers to recruit workers by helping employers assess their labor needs and making appropriate referrals to their job openings.

Outreach specialists will continue to develop and maintain productive relationships with agricultural employers, who are identified in several ways, including knowledge of the local labor market, incoming job orders, employer associations, and word-of-mouth. Iowa will continue to utilize existing processes to link available MSFWs with employers, including ongoing collaborative efforts with one-stop center staff and local community-based organizations that provide services to MSFWs.

State and one-stop center staff provide information on local labor market conditions, intrastate and interstate temporary agricultural worker recruitment requirements (including information on the Foreign Labor Certification process). Information is also provided on the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Protection ACT (MSPA) and how it affects agricultural employers and migratory workers.

4. Other Requirements

A. Collaboration

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Collaboration

Iowa will move forward immediately with entering into a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NFJP grantee, Proteus, for inter-agency referrals and data sharing. The goal will be to establish and demonstrate effective coordination of outreach and increased registration activities for both service providers. Outreach staff routinely conduct co-outreach with Proteus, as well as other organizations committed to providing assistance to the MSFW community.

The SWA will actively work to identify additional agencies with which it will be beneficial to enter into MOUs in order to provide a coordinated outreach effort for the MSFW population.

All MOUs will be evaluated on a yearly basis between all parties involved to change or adjust agreements as needed to better serve the MSFW population.

B. Review and Public Comment.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Review and Public Comment

Iowa solicited public comments on the State's Unified State Plan in its entirety, including the Agricultural Outreach Plan, for a 30-day period. Other targeted stakeholders were notified of the posting and included the MSFW Outreach Specialists, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, NASS Iowa field office, and the NFJP grantee - Proteus. The plan was also posted (or linked) on all core partner websites with instructions on how to submit public comments. A statewide press release was issued by IWD and the Governor's office, a targeted and broad-based email notification was issued to all identified required and optional workforce partners, and the draft was publicly available Iowa's Administrative Rules website.

The State of Iowa did not receive any public comments on the Agricultural Outreach Plan portion of the State's Unified State Plan. The final plan, as submitted, will be posted for a period of 30 days beginning on or about September 1, 2016, to above described entities. All comments received will be reviewed, documented on the IWD WIOA website, and considered for inclusion and incorporation into the State's Unified State Plan.

C. Data Assessment.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Data Assessment

Iowa did not meet the targets for the number of MSFW referred to jobs, referred to supportive services, referred to occupational trainings, the number of job development contacts or the required number of field checks during the prior plan year.

Iowa experienced considerable vacancies in Outreach Specialist and State Monitor Advocate positions which reduced the level of services being offered. This had an impact

on referrals to supportive services, referrals to training opportunities, and field checks. In addition, many of the migrant workers traveling to Iowa do not desire assistance of workforce services in our state as they are here for the season work opportunities. They usually return to their primary state of residence once the opportunities for season employment have ended.

Remedies

Iowa needs to be fully staffed with four (4) Outreach staff and one (1) State Monitor Advocate in order to meet the demands of the workers and employers. Moving to a District Service Delivery approach for Outreach coverage should assist in reducing the coverage area for each Outreach staff so they can provide for greater service delivery and reduce the amount of time traveling.

Continuing to increase our communication, coordination, and utilization of our Workforce System partners will provide additional staff support when conducting outreach activities to workers and employers. Iowa will increase our focus on workers who currently reside in Iowa and provide increased efforts to move this pool of worker into more permanent and self-sustaining employment opportunities.

D. Assessment of progress

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Assessment of Progress

In the prior Agricultural Outreach Plan, Iowa set the minimum required target goal of five (5) contacts per outreach day that was exceeded by averaging nine (9) contacts per outreach day. This can be attributed to Iowa's continued partnership with Proteus, the Department of Education, and Iowa State University's Community Outreach program and the MSFW Outreach Specialists' focus on contacting workers.

Outreach specialists, through conversations with advocacy groups, Workforce System partners, farmworkers, and employers, were able to better estimate the number of farmworkers in Iowa by nearly 50 percent. This is a result of establishing consistent and effective communication and relationship building, allowing an increased registration of MSFW in the Employment Exchange system by 50 percent. This is attributed to the efforts of the outreach specialists who collected demographic information at on-boarding and orientation events and mobile technology devices. As a result of the increased registration, Iowa was able to increase the coaching/career guidance services offered to MSFW.

E. State Monitor Advocate

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

State Monitor Advocate

The State of Iowa is in the process of hiring a new State Monitor Advocate (SMA). After hire, the new SMA will be responsible for reviewing the four-year Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP), and will provide feedback at that time. The SMA will continue writing, revising and commenting on the AOP.

Until such time as the SMA is hired and trained, the Workforce Services Manager, Todd Spencer, is serving as the acting SMA and has reviewed, provided input to, and approved, the Agricultural Outreach Plan in its current form.

Wagner-Peyser Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes
2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

a. Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

Adult education and literacy (AEL) services offer a student-centered approach, in which instructors help participants set and achieve learning goals. Iowa's AEL funded providers facilitate participant progress by incorporating college and career readiness standards in instruction, sharing best practices and providing ongoing professional development and training for instructors, data specialists and coordinators of programs.

Local programs measure educational levels and progress using standardized assessment tools and by following the assessment policy guidelines disseminated to programs

annually. Providers record gains using the Tops Enterprise (TE®) online reporting system. The state and local providers use the data to analyze program performance.

All of Iowa's federally funded AEL providers are instituting the federal College and Career Readiness Standards and have already incorporated the Common Core standards in the high school diploma programs as per Iowa's administrative rule 23.7(1) adopted January 14, 2015:

b. The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous and scientifically valid research available; and

c. Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.

The State's implementation of and support for academic content standards grounded in research has been evident in several ways. National trainers were brought to Iowa to offer College and Career Readiness training in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. Each of these two-day training institutes helped instructors understand the fundamental advances in instruction that the CCR standards demand. Instructors received critical information (methods and materials) about the CCR standards with a strong focus on the key advances in instruction and curriculum that the standards demand.

In addition, Iowa will also address the urgent need for educational equity, access, and rigor for adult English language learners (ELLs) by ensuring that program instructors are trained in the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for Adult Education. The ELL Standards for Adult Education are essential to ensuring that adult ELLs receive the focused and effective instruction they need to access our state's academic content standards. Iowa's English language acquisition programs will be designed to support ELLs in becoming skilled in reading, writing, and comprehension of English and help ELLs obtain a high school credential and support them as they move toward further education, training, or employment.

Local educational programs will continue to provide standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment focusing on the skills that enable learners to participate more fully within American society as citizens, workers, and family members. Funds were released to eligible AEFLA programs to support professional development efforts in continued implementation of standards based instruction for 2018 - 2020. Monitoring will be used to track the implementation of the college and career readiness standards in lesson plans, curriculum and assessment for preparation in transitioning successfully to further education or employment.

b. Local Activities

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined

State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) is the State's Eligible Agency (SEA) for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds. The department is responsible for administering the funds and providing program and performance oversight to grantees. AEL eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements continued to receive funding through June 30, 2017, based on their fulfillment of grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During the program year 2016-17, the department implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding to determine the local eligible providers starting July 1, 2017. The state's AEFLA grant process will rate responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and include additional state priorities, standards and context. An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include any entity described by the WIOA.

AEFLA grant applicants are required to describe in their funding proposals the activities that are planned to support the adult education and literacy activities in their proposed service delivery area. Specifically, applicants will be asked to discuss (1) outreach efforts for attracting participants with low literacy skills to the program; (2) program design accommodations particularly focused on the needs of participants (i.e., child care, class times and locations, curriculum content, and materials); and (3) linkages established with education, workforce and community partners to facilitate the integration of services for participants. At the department a Two-Generation approach has been emphasized. These efforts have included reaching out to community, faith-based and local education agencies to share information and discuss potential partnerships or collaborations in addressing literacy and basic skill needs.

Applicants will be required to respond and be evaluated based on the following principles of program quality to assist with continuous program improvement.

1. **Learner Progress** - Learners demonstrate progress toward attainment of literacy skills, including reading, writing, and speaking English, computing, and solving problems at levels of proficiency and are able to demonstrate the ability to transfer learning from the classroom to real life skills necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.
2. **Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development** - The program has a written, standards-based curriculum and provides instruction matching learner needs while supporting an ongoing, professional development process that is linked to a professional development plan supporting the program's vision and goals. Curriculum development and instruction meets learners' needs and learning styles and is embedded in real-life contexts while anchored in standards (CCRS and Employability). The program provides opportunities for all instructors to participate in on-going professional development with support in integrating new evidence-based strategies into instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation to improve instructional practice.
3. **Program Design and Leadership** - The program implements the key design elements articulated in its funded proposal and program leadership ensures that the vision for success is shared by staff and learners and that the program engages in a continuous improvement planning process. The program serves the adult education needs of the community.
4. **Accountability** - The program has policies and best practices to demonstrate fiscal responsibility, accuracy and reliability of data reporting, and protection of data according to federal requirements and shows progress toward achieving state performance benchmarks. The program also implements processes for fiscal and data management that ensures accuracy in reports, validity, reliability, privacy and security.
5. **Community Interaction and Outreach** - The program builds a visible and valued presence in the community, which in turn supports the program by recruiting learners and talents and coordinating local resources for support services, economic opportunity through career pathways, and further education and training opportunities.
6. **One-Stop System Integration** - The program takes steps to implement WIOA's vision as expressed in Iowa's Unified State and Local Plan for a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways.

Eligible providers will be required to be a full-service adult education program providing instruction for ALL educational functioning levels (EFL) (five Adult Basic Education (ABE) and all six English as a Second Language (ESL)), based on identified needs of the region. Funded providers are also charged with preparing adult learners for and support them in achieving successful transition to postsecondary education and training or employment.

Eligible providers are required to offer these activities, per the Iowa WIOA Unified State Plan:

- Adult education;
- English language acquisition activities;

- Literacy; and
- Workforce preparation activities.

Eligible providers may also offer any of the following, as needed, per 34 CFR Part 463.30, Subpart D:

- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

Eligible providers may also offer up to twenty percent (20%) of their allocation on the following, as needed, per 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart F:

- Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals
 1. Adult education and literacy activities;
 2. Integrated education and training.

Adult education and literacy services at a minimum targets native speakers of American English who function below a high school equivalency in one or more basic academic skills, who demonstrate a need for remediation to test into credit-bearing college level coursework, or who lack the employability skills needed to transition into work. Other adults eligible for these services include non-native speakers of American English who have successfully acquired a level of proficiency in English, either through federally-funded English literacy programs or other ways, to be able to function adequately in adult education and literacy classes with native speakers.

Outreach Efforts

An area of focus for Iowa is increasing the number of low skilled individuals successfully transitioning to postsecondary education and employment. Each applicant sets enrollment targets that are measured and used for performance monitoring. Enrollment is also reviewed for co-enrollment as well as participants with multiple barriers to employment. These enrollment goals are part of a strategic effort to increase the skill set for adults in becoming future ready and contributing to the talent pipeline for employers in high demand industry. All funded providers are required to set an enrollment target and are funded based upon actual enrollment of participants. Some strategies that are encouraged by the department include but are not limited to offering flexible schedules, providing support services and year-round activities in age-appropriate settings. During program year 2014, the department set the enrollment goal to serve five percent of the total state population without a high school degree, 18 years and older, as determined by county survey. This represented a 12 percent increase in enrollment for AEL providers compared to the previous year. Since that enrollment target, each provider has increased their overall number of participants being served.

In addition to an enrollment target, the department has been actively working with providers in raising public awareness of adult education and literacy services with a

statewide branding campaign. The campaign has included a 1-800 number for all participants to be connected directly with their closest provider, a series of public service ads, informational videos detailing collaborative efforts between core partners, and resource materials to adapt to local needs.

A key area for increases in enrollment and outreach has been with the immigration population in Iowa. While the total immigrant population in Iowa remains relatively small, there has been a steady increase of 2.5 percent over the past five years. In 2014, English language acquisition (ELA) activities represented 47 percent of the total population served for adult education and literacy activities. As part of core required services, ELA activities are offered in a diverse cross section of Iowa counties, from urban areas that have an influx of immigrants from many nations to agricultural counties that have experienced a growth in their immigration population. Due to this growth, the department has been working on immigrant initiatives to increase coordination with local One Stop centers to support English Language Learners (ELL) in accessing services.

Educating partners and expanding service sites along with service delivery options (including distance education and tutoring) have been an active pursuit for the department. This strategy has led to a collaboration with the Iowa Literacy Council, established from Executive Order, to serve the literacy needs of adults in Iowa. As part of the of Council's strategic vision to ensure that, "every Iowan has the literacy skills to reach their personal and professional goals", five goals have been established.

Goal 1: Seek to identify persons in need of literacy training and strive to serve any Iowan with a demonstrable need for these services;

Goal 2: Coordinate literacy program in Iowa;

Goal 3: Serve as a clearinghouse for information on the literacy services available in Iowa;

Goal 4: Provide greater visibility to literacy programs in Iowa, and encourage Iowans to volunteer their assistance; and

Goal 5: Provide technical support to literacy volunteers and literacy programs.

These collaborative partnerships aid in defining the scope of the services for AEL.

Program Design

Eligible local providers were required to describe in their application for funds their process for development and/or approval of curriculum and evidence of how instruction meets learners' needs and learning styles, while embedded in real-life contexts anchored in Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy standards (College and Career Readiness Standards, 21st Century Skills and English Language Proficiency Standards). All adult education, literacy, and English language acquisition activities are required to be based upon the department's adopted content standards. Eligible providers were also required to detail their practice for ensuring high quality instructors are engaged in on-going professional development with support in integrating new evidence-based strategies into instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation to improve instructional practice.

Providers are encouraged to be innovative in delivering instruction to include individual and group activities, to meet the diverse needs of adult learners. Adult education programs offer a student-centered approach, in which instructors help participants set and achieve learning goals. Iowa adult education and literacy programs facilitate student progress by incorporating college and career readiness standards in instruction, sharing best practices and providing ongoing professional development and training for instructors, data specialists and coordinators of programs. Local programs measure educational levels and progress using standardized assessment tools and by following the assessment policy guidelines disseminated to programs annually. All funded providers will be required to record gains using the Tops Enterprise (TE®) online reporting system. The state and local providers use the data to analyze program performance.

The state benchmarks for each educational functioning level (EFL) remains the focus for all funded providers with performance-based funding and a targeted post-test rate established annually and posted in Iowa's Assessment Policy Guidelines. This performance data is reviewed monthly during webinar meetings with all funded providers. In addition, training from the state data specialist and publicly posted benchmark progression has made it possible for each provider to review local and statewide data. Iowa adult education and literacy programs help to ensure that adults have the skills needed to compete in the knowledge-based economy. This is in keeping with increasing economic opportunity and raising the standard of living in Iowa. Pilots have been conducted and will be expanded to partner with credit and non-credit courses to encourage the transition of adult learners to a career pathway. The pilots are designed to increase the number of adult learners earning transferrable credit, marketable credential, and/or entering postsecondary education.

Adult Basic Education

As a requirement for all funded providers, the goal of Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities is to improve participants' basic skills in language arts and mathematics. ABE activities are performance oriented and deliver instruction through processes that facilitates, measure, and certify learning outcomes. In addition to offering comprehensive services to meet the diverse educational needs of participants and to prepare them to transition to postsecondary education and job preparation classes, activities are conducted within flexible time limits and are relevant to the practical needs of adults.

ABE activities include literacy (reading and writing) and computational skills necessary for functioning at levels comparable to the skills needed to complete a high school equivalency diploma. Courses may be remedial for students or they may provide educational opportunities for students who speak, but do not read, English. These activities are standards-based and are designed to teach the academic skills necessary for success, and to help participants acquire family sustaining employment.

With the incorporation of STAR (Student Achievement in Reading), managed enrollment has been encouraged by the department for activities to provide direct explicit instruction in adult education and literacy classrooms. This delivery approach is research based and is evidenced through program performance. This shift in classroom management has required a transition period for AEL providers, but has been a required component for applicants to respond to in the grant application.

English Language Acquisition

As part of required core services, English language acquisition activities assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; assist adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and assist adults in completing a secondary school education.

In order to prepare the English Language Learner (ELL) population for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and integrate them into the workforce system, the department will support extending the existing ELA activities with employability skills and integrating digital literacy skills. The ELA activities are required to align to the English Language Proficiency Standards. In their application for funds, eligible providers are required to describe the curriculum and instructional materials to be used (which includes reading, listening, comprehension and speaking) and any planned workforce preparation activities must align to Iowa's 21st Century Skills.

Within the ELA activities, participants are placed in appropriate skill-level classes through assessments of general language proficiency. There are six levels of instruction: beginning literacy, beginning low, beginning high, intermediate low, intermediate high, and advanced. The assessments for progressing from one level to another measure both general language proficiency and specific standards mastered. The key objectives for adult education English language acquisition are to:

- Provide stress-free and comfortable learning environments in order to reduce anxiety that interferes with obtaining language fluency;
- Integrate language acquisition with relevant life experiences stressing the importance of critical thinking, problem solving, and self-sufficiency;
- Use proficiency standards for assessing the major accomplishments of the students;
- Develop students' receptive English language skills of listening and reading comprehension;
- Develop students' productive English language skills of speaking and writing;
- Provide students with the ability to use English that is accurate and appropriate in a variety of academic and social settings; and
- Provide students with English language and citizenship instruction necessary to successfully complete the citizenship application and interview process.

Linkages for Integration

With the increased awareness of the need for a workforce to be able to function in a highly technical environment, more emphasis is being placed on education. The adult education and literacy program has responded to this focus by supplying their services either in business and industry or in the classroom. Collaboration, coordination, and cooperation have been the mainstays of the services offered by AEFLA funded providers from the beginning including: 1) effective referrals, 2) comprehensive assessment, 3) tracking participant goals and progress, and 4) data-informed decisions driving planned services for the participant. There has always been strong collaboration with federal

employment training programs to help adults prepare for the workforce and become self-sufficient. Adult education and literacy programs, in their local communities, seek out working agreements with Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Department of Workforce Development, adult and juvenile court officials, and other service agencies.

In lieu of performance based funding during the first two years of the grant, funds set aside for this purpose will be used to incentivize the AEFLA funded providers in the delivery of integrated education, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training services for participants in a concurrent and contextually delivered series of activities aligned to a regional career pathway. All adult basic education must be based on the College and Career Readiness content standards with workforce preparation activities aligned with Iowa's 21st Century Skills. All workforce training services referenced in WIOA Section 134 (c) (3) (D), must be anchored on industry standards. Eligible providers are required to describe in their application for funds how the instructional materials to be used meet these requirements.

Integrated Education and Training

Integrated Education and Training (IET) is defined as an education model that “combines occupational skills training with adult education services to increase the educational and career advancement of participants. In programs that deliver IET, adults participate in both occupational skills training and adult education services at the same time.” IET means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Some Workforce Investment Act, AEFLA funded providers have piloted IET elements in their adult education programming and are adopting quickly to integrating all components necessary for this activity. In early spring 2017, technical assistance in defining the required components of IET was provided by the department.

Ten of the 15 awarded WIOA AEFLA providers submitted responses to the required narratives to offer IET activities effective July 1, 2017. Funds according to the number of participants projected to be enrolled were awarded providers to support the provision of all required activities. For program year 2017-2018, the state's participant enrollment goal for IET, set by the funded providers, is 423. Additional leadership funds are being used to assist in the planning of the delivery for IET activities. AEFLA funded providers were able to apply to participate in targeted technical assistance offered by the state. This assistance will continue throughout 2017-2018 and offer professional development, and research-based models to aid in the planning and delivery of IET activities and programs.

The department's focus has been to promote the engagement of all core partners to blend adult education content, workforce preparation activities and workforce training. There are several models for IET, and our AEL providers are working to identify with their partners the best fit for their participant's needs and their resources, including curriculum design. The most common models have included an alternating instructional approach with subject matter experts delivering contextualized curriculum during flexible hours of

instruction that stack upon skills related to a defined career pathway. This approach has worked well when the workforce training and has included on the job or customized employer training. Other options have included a co-teaching model with subject matter experts delivering specific instruction at the same time and in the same classroom. This method has been very popular in the delivery of industry recognized certificate trainings, such as Certified Nursing Assistant and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) operator.

The department is encouraged by the initial outcomes with providers ranging from exploration of regional labor market needs and career pathway sectors, engagements with core partners, and to emerging IET programs in CNA, CDL and welding. The linkages necessary for IET programs and activities to be successful is predicated upon teams dedicated to providing resources and input in the IET's development. Toward that cause, the department has partnered with LINCS in the development of an Iowa Community of Practice exclusive to the development of IET and IELCE related programs and activities to provide dialogue and resources on an ongoing basis.

Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

c. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

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The Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) has been an excellent partner with Iowa's adult education and literacy programs. One of DOC's major objectives is to provide educational and career and technical training to incarcerated youth and adults, to ensure a smooth transition for returning citizens and a reduction in the state's recidivism rate. The Iowa Department of Education will continue to work collaboratively with the DOC in aligning their curriculum and student performance standards, data accountability system, and teacher training with the state administered AEL services.

Iowa's PY 2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017) reporting year describes recidivism for offenders leaving prison in FY 2014 and tracked 4,586 offenders and found 1,113 (24.3percent) returned to prison due to a new conviction and 510 (11.1 percent) returned to prison for technical reasons associated with a previous conviction. This totals a 35.4 percent recidivism rate for Iowa.

Iowa's AEFLA funded providers enroll participants at state correctional institutions and through local correctional and institutionalized facilities. Effective through an MOU and the use of shared state leadership funds, all correctional programs are held accountable to the required WIOA performance except when excluded and subject to the Iowa Assessment Policy Guidelines. In PY2017, AEL data shows that 16 percent (1,879) of all participants were corrections and institutionalized individuals. The majority of those served, 93 percent (1,760), were from state correctional sites.

Funds awarded from federal Section 231 funds may be used to support the correctional programs in providing allowable academic programs within the twenty percent expenditure cap. The option to use funds for the purpose of Section 225 was made available in the competitive application. Five of the 15 funded programs are using funds directed toward Section 225. Details of their activities and their use of funds specific to corrections was submitted in their application. The DOC contract, in partnership with the community colleges and the Iowa Department of Education adult education and literacy team works to establish the level of staff, curriculum and program standards to be offered in each of the nine state facilities. With additional focus on transition services and reducing recidivism, the use of Section 231 funds are being applied to support and extend the state funded academic programs to assist participants in acquiring the basic skills and competencies necessary to move from an institutional setting into the workforce and community.

Programs will provide adult education instruction at all levels of basic academic skills, for students who meet the eligibility requirements for enrollment. Participants in correctional settings must qualify for adult education and literacy activities by lacking

sufficient mastery of basic educational skills, or have not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent. The use of funds will include all allowable activities detailed in Sec. 225(b)(1-8). Particular emphasis will be in developing programs that integrate the basic skills instruction with life skills, employability skills (which includes digital literacy) to help participants acquire necessary abilities to become and remain self-sufficient after leaving prison. Transition focused activities include preapprenticeship efforts as well as integrated education and training activities that are in partnership with the apprenticeship efforts. Corrections will continue to be a partner in the career pathway efforts to ensure that instructional activities are aligned with regional needs at each correctional location. Iowa's adult education and literacy program gives priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave correctional institutions within five years of participation in adult education programs.

d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

1. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) will leverage past experiences with providing English literacy and civics education in meeting the new requirements for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) under WIOA. Programs will be established through an application for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IECLE), section 243, as described in detail in VI.d.2 and require applicants to provide a narrative describing plans to provide English language acquisition (ELA) that is aligned with the English Proficiency Standards and civics education along with program access to integrated education and training services. In addition, each program will ensure access to career advising for each participant while engaging in occupationally relevant education and training that is aligned to a regionally developed career pathway and Iowa's 21st Century Skills. The application will be reviewed and scored by the department to ensure compliance and quality of services. The review will take into account the following factors:

- selection committee's scoring and recommendations (scoring rubrics will be published on the AEL program website here);
- alignment of proposed applicant activities with needs for services in the intended service area;
- evaluation of cost of service relative to need and cost efficiency;
- evaluation of historic program data provided by the applicant; and
- evaluation of financial internal controls provided by applicant.

In addition, the department may contact employees, board members, partners or business associates of applicant organizations to clarify or verify information and responses provided by applicants. Each application will be evaluated solely on the criteria identified in this document. Receipt of a grant award in a previous competition is not, and should not be regarded as, a guarantee of funding in the current competition. Applicants not

funded in previous competitions are not precluded from applying for funding in the current competition. Once all of the applications have been evaluated, the review panel will submit to the department its recommendations. Final funding decisions will be made by the department and is considered final.

The biggest challenge with the IELCE competition will be adequate funding for quality IELCE programs that will in turn serve Iowa's adult English language learners (ELL), including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Despite the funding challenges, IELCE awards will be based on the number of participants grantees are proposing to serve. There are three different bands of funding, ranging from \$10,000 up to \$40,000 per program year. Programs must serve at least 10 and up to 41+ participants depending on their award amount.

The department's English language acquisition consultant will provide technical assistance and guidance to funded IELCE programs as they begin or continue to expand their IELCE program. Some current practices which could be adopted to an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program include the following service delivery model:

- An awarded eligible provider offers English language acquisition and civics education and/or blended learning instruction with embedded workforce preparation activities aligned to a specific career pathway; and
- Partner with another educational provider to provide an industry recognized relevant occupational certificate that support in-demand regional employers.

A recent example of this model is being piloted and includes co-teaching in the manufacturing industry with a resulting certificate as a CNC operator (which has been identified through sector partnership work as in-demand occupation with clearly defined educational ladders and lattices to other training and occupational fields). This example includes integrated contextual and employability skills offered over a 16-week period. The course includes key objectives related to building basic skills and becoming certified through an occupational assessment. As appropriate, the training includes introductions to regional employers and hands-on training, internships or apprenticeships to build work experience opportunities for cohort participants.

2. Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) is the designated state agency responsible for administering funds and providing program and performance oversight to eligible local AEFLA funded providers for the provision of section 243, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE). During grant year 2016-17, the department will implement a competitive application process for IELCE funding that will determine the eligible entities that will be awarded. The department will award multi-year grants on a competitive basis beginning with an initial one year grant PY 2018 (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018). Following the initial year, the department reserves the right to fund grantees for additional program years. Extensions will be contingent on the grant

recipient's ability to successfully implement the terms of the grant, to meet performance expectations, and to provide value to the community. This grant extension can be renewed in subsequent years until the department determines that a new multi-year competition for the grant needs to occur.

During the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts the department with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. In addition, the department will actively promote the release of the funding opportunity through the state grant process, among all eligible providers and will be conducting regional face to face and a webinar bidders' conference to address frequently asked questions for new and potential applicants. The department requires all eligible providers for funds from Section 243 to use the same application process, the state grant management system, Iowagrants. The department uses the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA to fund eligible providers.

Entities must provide narrative details to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration along with alignment of English language acquisition with the CCRS. In addition, each program will demonstrate their connection to a career pathway and whether access to career advising is embedded in the activity. The review of proposals will include rating responses to each of the 13 considerations. To determine if an applicant is an entity of demonstrated effectiveness, all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve English language acquisition and civics education concurrently and contextually workplace skills, along with access to work based learning through an integrated education and training model of instruction. Prior recipients of English Literacy and Civics Education funds under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and new organizations will be provided forms to show demonstrated student learning gains. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness.

Similar to the competition for Section 225 and 231 funds, the application will be reviewed by a panel and scored according to a point-based scoring rubric weighting each of the considerations. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness and score above the minimum threshold will be eliminated from the competition. Funded providers will be monitored and required to demonstrate continuous quality improvement. The department plans to issue continual guidance and technical assistance to eligible providers on how to co-enroll participants in occupational training, and how section 243 funds may be used to provide occupational training as part of an integrated education and training program, as appropriate.

TIMELINE: The following steps were taken in conducting the IELCE competition:

- **March 15, 2017:** Department published Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the priorities in the approved State Unified Plan.
- **March 28, 2017:** Department provided a bidders' conference and technical assistance.
- **March/April 2017:** Department established a review panel.
- **May 1, 2017:** Due date for IELCE grant applications.
- **May 2017:** Reviewers scored grant applications.

- **June 10, 2017:** Department announced IELCE awardees.
- **July 1, 2017:** IELCE grant cycle began.

The department received eleven IELCE proposals from eligible providers as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sec. 202. The scoring rubric evaluated learner progress, curriculum, instruction, and professional development, program design, leadership, accountability, community outreach, and One-Stop system integration. Reviewers included internal and external subject matter experts responsible for rating each program proposal based on the 13 WIOA considerations. Three out of the eleven programs did not meet the minimum scoring threshold, securing an average below 70% of the allotted points and were not selected as recipients for the grant.

From July 1, 2017 to present, two main career clusters of IELCE programs are advanced manufacturing and health care. Technical assistance from state staff is provided to funded programs to ensure alignment and compliance with the IELCE federal and state requirements. In an effort to continue to serve Iowans who are English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, the department has established Iowa Administrative Code 281-32.10 which provides for the award of a high school equivalency diploma (HSED) to a resident participant who presents a postsecondary degree equivalent to an associate degree or higher from outside the United States.

In summary, through a competitive and fair competition, quality technical assistance, and additional policies that recognize the needs and strengths of Iowans who are English language learners including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, Iowa will have quality IELCE programs. Programs will enable such adults to achieve competency in the English language through standards-based instruction and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, citizens, and workers in the United States, enroll participants in occupational training, as appropriate, and how section 243 funds may be used to provide occupational training as part of an integrated education and training program.

e. State Leadership

1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team is committed to a seamless transition to the required state leadership activities and has identified a number of areas in which services are already being provided through technical assistance or through targeted training. Funds made available under section 222(a)(2) will not exceed more than 12.5 percent of the AEFLA funds. Of the state leadership funds, twenty percent is awarded to local programs to implement required leadership activities under section 223. These local funds are awarded under the general AEFLA grant application according to enrollment in adult education and literacy programs. Activities that support the required leadership activities include:

- A. Alignment studies have been initiated at the state and local level to identify best practices in strategies for integration and collaboration. Several working groups have been formed to address the implementation of WIOA and alignment. The removal of duplication and the addressing of gaps has been identified as a high priority in the ranking of recommendations among core partners. Funds will be used to build the capacity of local programs to coordinate and align services which will include cross-training core partner staff on intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and a common referral process. Additional efforts to align services includes work toward a common distance education platform that integrates education and training of basic skills, employability skills and career and technical education.

In addition, the development of sector partnerships and subsequent career pathway development will continue to be a priority with a focus on aligning services as a participant transitions from adult education through integrated education and training to further their education and employment opportunities. Through the Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration, a three-year technical assistance grant, a state advisory board for career pathways and sector boards has been formed to guide further discussion and development of unified definitions, an approval process and performance measures for evaluating effectiveness.

- B. The state adult education and literacy program supports high quality professional development as demonstrated in the recently adopted Iowa Administrative Code 281:23.7 which defines the responsibility of the programs for providing professional development opportunities for professional and volunteer staff, including:

- Proper procedures for administration and reporting;
- The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous and scientifically valid research available; and
- Appropriate reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training practices aligned with content standards for adult education.

In addition to responsibilities, standards and minimum professional development hours, plans and monitoring has been incorporated into the administrative code. This has resulted in the use of a professional development online tracking platform for adult education and literacy programs. The platform tracks instructor plans, hours of professional development attended (including required pre-service), catalogs of state and local offerings of trainings and provides reports to the state on usage, alignment of plans with attended activities as well as classroom observations aligned with Iowa's instructor standards aimed at identifying the application of content standards in practice. By tracking individual and program plans, along with collective classroom observations, state leadership funds can be

better targeted for needs that will support professional developments use in the classroom in areas such as, content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, effective program management (universal design), integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to post-secondary education, use of technology, distance education, serving students with disabilities, and tutor training and recruitment. Contracts for professional development services related to research-based activities include Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) training and technical assistance; EBRI, ESL and Blended Learning study circles; and implementation of content standards.

- C. Technical assistance will be provided to local programs to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established program, instructor and performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus include:
1. Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:
 - STAR training and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction study circles;
 - Writing webinars;
 - Low-literacy alphabetics and vocabulary;
 - High-literacy fluency and comprehension;
 - Continued support of Adult Numeracy Initiative (ANI) cohorts;
 - Hosting the first Virtual Conference to highlight distance education and technology integration; and
 - Annual Adult Education and Literacy Summer Institute.
 2. Enabling local programs to establish, build upon, and maintain effective relationships with their regional core partners with common training on a system orientation, referral process, data sharing/reporting, integration of education with occupational training, and sector partnership and career pathway development.
 3. Using technology to improve program effectiveness through a professional development tracking platform, developing online repositories of reviewed and aligned lesson plans, online training through customized modules and technical assistance focused on identifying and utilizing technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education.
- D. Iowa's adult education and literacy team use a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to local programs, practitioners and participants. These will include activities such as:

- Local program site visits;
- A monthly electronic PD newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
- Sessions at state and local conferences, including the first virtual conference, will showcase promising practices and models;
- Webinars showcasing promising practices and models;
- Job descriptions with embedded professional development activities based on the adopted Iowa administrative code; and
- Dissemination of standards and annually updated handbooks.

Local programs are evaluated for effectiveness by the IDOE through their status update, oversight of data integrity, fiscal monitoring as well as desktop and site visits. For programs with reported findings associated with the administration of their grant, a corrective action plan is developed and approved by the state to track continuous improvement in identified areas of concern.

2. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team provides activities such as the operation of professional development programs; the provision of technology assistance, including staff training; program improvement and support; alignment studies with standards and competencies, especially curricula incorporating 21st century skills, workplace readiness activities and phonemic awareness; coordination with other agencies to increase enrollment and successful completion in adult education programs; and linkages with post-secondary institutions.

Currently, communities of practice exist to help disseminate information to providers. Evidence-based instruction in writing, reading, and math has been driven by a cadre of trainers (STAR, numeracy academy, and former CASAS writing trainers). In addition, trainers involved with the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) have been able to offer specialized ESL and speaking training and develop strategies to address multi-level instruction. Training in these core subject areas has focused on the lead standards approach, promoted by education expert, Dr. Robert Marzano, and others which offers instructors a method for translating standards into curriculum by utilizing three interrelated action steps: identify lead standards; design coherent units of instruction; and conduct lesson studies. Adopting the lead-standards approach brings about greater coherence, provides focus, and ensures that standards are covered in a logical and effective manner.

Surveys have been conducted to establish a baseline of current practices and levels of integration for the one-stop centers. Based on this information, guiding documents will be developed and disseminated to assist eligible funded programs in their roles and responsibilities associated with partnering with the one-stop centers. Trainings will accompany these documents to assist with implementation and help address barriers to ensure seamlessly delivery for the participant.

Online professional development courses make it possible for Iowa's adult education and literacy team to provide information without disrupting local programs' services for adults. Improved consistency of instruction and reduced travel costs for trainers and participants are also important considerations for implementing distance learning. Online courses can be accessed at the convenience of the educator, thereby enabling new instructors to begin learning about their roles and responsibilities immediately. Three online, interactive professional development courses are currently being offered to thirty AEL educators across the state for a more in depth exploration into critical adult education teaching skills. Courses include: Identifying and Remediating Reading Skill Difficulties; Motivating the Adult Learner; and Blended Learning in Adult Education.

Iowa's adult education and literacy team is exploring the development of a repository for lesson plans and expanding online professional development courses in adult education. An integrated professional development platform enables local programs to submit additional online or face to face professional development opportunities offered throughout the state.

The professional development committee, which consists of local program coordinators, adult education and literacy instructors, and state staff, is designed to prioritize and coordinate state level staff development activities. This program year will see a number of changes to professional development as teacher effectiveness strategies are reviewed by the committee. Policies on professional development will help establish adult education and literacy expectations for the state. Professional Development standards will assist programs in providing state approved targeted training that is aimed at improving quality instruction to adult learners. The main targets for Instructional System improvements include:

- Develop and disseminate guidance, documents, and models to align state policy with the qualification of staff and implement instructional standards for classroom management and high quality instructional practices;
- Expand the use of the STAR reading program with each funded program implementing the evidence based strategies in reading instruction; and
- Incorporate the professional development platform to support program and individual continuous quality improvement.

Additional activities supported by state leadership funds are evaluated against the following criteria:

- statewide implementation, adoption, and diffusion into adult literacy instructional strategies, methodologies and curriculum infusion;
- Programs' participation on state leadership committee;
- Programs' alignment of professional development to Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy Professional Development Standards
<http://bit.ly/IowaDepartmentofEducation>;
- Alignment with Iowa Administrative Code (IAC):281.23;
- Implementation of standards based instruction: lead standards approach; designing coherent units of instruction; conducting lesson studies; participating in

- peer groups; and engaging in classroom observations for continuous quality improvement;
- Long-term improvement in program outcomes measured by the state and local program's ability to continually meet the state negotiated benchmark levels; and
- Adult learner assistance to effectively meet personal and program literacy goals.

f. Assessing Quality

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The Iowa Department of Education's Adult Education and Literacy team uses various means of assessment in an annual and ongoing evaluation process of local entities including: professional development evaluations; site and desktop monitoring; program status updates; monthly performance reviews; and quarterly financial reviews. The results of these processes determine program improvement actions and program improvement plans.

- A. **Professional Development Evaluation.** Participants are surveyed after all workshops, conference presentations, and professional development offerings in compliance with Iowa's Professional Development standards to evaluate and provide feedback on the activity or event. Through the state sponsored professional development platform, My Learning Plan, all professional development offerings are available for registration, the tracking of hours, individual professional development plans, and evaluation forms. The platform is also designed to collect individual classroom observations to track the implementation of professional development in instruction to determine if the training impacted student outcomes and to determine areas where additional training may be needed. The annual training plan includes Iowa's priorities derived from input from surveys and training requests through the professional development platform, and guidance from a statewide professional development leadership council. Survey results and requests are reviewed with the professional development leadership council to decide if the training is technical assistance or a professional development opportunity and how best to deliver and define the objectives. Annual priority areas include:

- *New Coordinator Training.* Provides new coordinators with information such as federal and State guidelines, data collection and National Reporting System (NRS) reporting, and resources needed to administer their programs.
- *Data Reporting and Program Improvement Training.* Provides training on the fundamentals of the NRS. Topics include monitoring, data analysis and collection, types of data and measures, assessments, data quality, and related information.
- *Instructor Training.* Provides information and resources to support instruction in the areas of high school equivalency preparation, evidence based reading instruction, math, college and career readiness, career awareness and planning, and career pathways instructional strategies.

Professional development offered by local entities is required and is supported by the allocation of state leadership funds to focus on priority areas.

Actions Taken to Improve Quality. In state sponsored professional development, changes are made to future trainings based on input from participants. Data is compiled from the professional development platform based on local entities instructors attending trainings, number of professional development hours attended, evaluations, individual professional development plans and classroom observations to make data-driven decisions on future trainings. As such, consistent inefficiencies throughout local entities are addressed by the state as priority areas. Inefficiencies that are isolated to a local area is required to be addressed in their status update - consistent inefficiencies require an improvement plan.

- B. Site and Desktop Monitoring.** Iowa has updated and aligned the adult education and literacy monitoring to include program standards that address WIOA implementation, along with a quality assurance system that will ensure learner progress and performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality, and regulatory compliance of local providers in accordance with federal laws and regulations. A risk assessment will be annually conducted by the state to evaluate variables associated with the program standards that determines the monitoring strategy appropriate for each local entity, desktop or onsite.

Adult education programs are and will be evaluated annually based on the following established principles of program quality. Indicators for each standard serve as guides for continuous improvement and progress.

1. **Learner Progress** — Program provides an interactive intake procedure with information presented using adult education principles and is accessible to ALL learners. Informal and formal assessment and collaborative goal development are used to gauge learner progress, guide instruction, advising and other services that support a “successful” transition and demonstrate gains in abilities.
2. **Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development** — Curriculum development and instruction meets learners’ needs and learning styles, is embedded in real-life contexts while anchored in standards (CCRS and Employability). The program provides opportunities for all instructors to participate in on-going professional development with support in integrating new evidence-based strategies into instruction through practice, feedback, reflection, and observation to improve instructional practice.
3. **Program Design and Leadership** — Program serves the adult education needs of the community. Program leader provides vision, direction, resources, evaluation and support for all program operations and staff that is effective and equitable in the provision of adult teaching and learning.
4. **Accountability** — Program implements processes for fiscal and data management that ensures accuracy in reports, validity, reliability, privacy and security. Sufficient resources and training is allocated to implement the processes for financial and data management with clearly defined procedures and the ability to monitor program efficiency and effectiveness.

5. **Community Interaction and Outreach** — Program establishes a visible and valued presence in the community through outreach and local partnerships. Program recruits and coordinates with partners and local resources to ensure the continuation of services to adult learners in the community.
6. **One-Stop System Integration** — Program addresses design principles that support the alignment of core and required WIOA partners to ensure seamless integrated services that are accessible to all jobseekers, workers and businesses through unified strategic planning and shared governance.

Actions Taken to Improve Quality. If noncompliance finding(s) are identified, corrective action will be implemented through a program improvement plan within 45 days of the monitoring. The corrective action must identify the findings and specific strategies the local entity will implement to ensure that finding(s) have been resolved. While areas of recommendations do not require corrective action, local entities may include improvement strategies that will be implemented in the upcoming year of funding.

- C. **Program Status Update.** For each continuing year after a competition, local entities are responsible for reporting back on strategies implemented during the program year and to address goal and performance areas requiring continuous improvement. Documented evidence of implementation for the previous year is required that can include qualitative and quantitative examples. Improvement strategies for any unmet performance and for each performance target that is not at least 90 percent achieved is required, detailing plans and other actions taken to improve quality in the upcoming year of funding. Status update forms are created on the grant management system and is able to collect documentation or evidence of implementation in any format provided by the local entity. Ad hoc reports are able to be generated comparing applications with updates within and across local entities. This information is used to track continuous quality improvement in the programs. Specific targets are required for updating which can include: enrollment, post-testing rates, educational functioning level gains, transitioning services and integrated education and training participation.

Actions Taken to Improve Quality. Status updates that fail to include sufficient documentation or continuous improvement will be negotiated back through the grant management system for additional information. Review of the updates are conducted by a panel. Technical assistance is provided for each local entity that has an update negotiated back for revisions. This assistance can include strategies related to goal setting, examples of documentation, or clarifying definitions.

- D. **Monthly Performance Review.** Conducting data integrity reports and monthly reporting of student records are requirements of Iowa's Assessment policy. This data is pulled from the online data management system and reviewed for validity. The following data elements are reviewed: Participant educational levels; Monthly attendance; Hours of instruction; Monthly exiting of students absent from the program for 90 days with no scheduled services; and Assignment of a college issued identification number. Key data elements are posted on the department's website for tracking local entities progress toward targets - this data includes NRS enrollment and High School Equivalency

Diplomas awarded. Each program is also assessed for post-test percentage and progress toward the state negotiated educational functioning level benchmarks among participants served. While this data is available to each program at any time through the data management system, the state's review is conducted at least monthly.

Actions Taken to Improve Quality. Performance reports are being tied to continuous improvement plans with required improvement action plans for any data elements that is not being updated on a monthly basis. Local entities that do not report their data are in non-compliance to Iowa's Assessment policy. Iowa's adult education and literacy funded programs are allocated funds based on performance. Lack of data limits the ability for the state to make data-driven decisions. In addition to technical assistance on data reporting, NRS guidelines and the implementation of Iowa's Assessment policy, best practices and recommendations are provided to assist the program in developing their improvement plan.

- E. **Quarterly Financial Reviews.** Through the grant management system, Iowa grants, quarterly claims from each local entity is reviewed by the state adult education and literacy team for allowable and allocable use of AEFLA funds. This review includes documentation for each expenditure against the budget and allocation for each local entity. There are three levels of approval, along with the requirement for original signed invoice. The financial review also tracks funds from state leadership that is allocated to each program for the purpose of implementing required leadership activities described in detail by the application from the local entity.

Actions Taken to Improve Quality. Financial reviews that are non-compliant are negotiated back for editing. These negotiations include outreach for technical assistance to both the program coordinator and fiscal agent, if necessary. Clarification on expectations is offered along with corrective actions. Due to the layers of approval needed, each level has the ability to negotiate back if necessary for correction or additional documentation. Amendments to the budget can be requested in alignment with the caps for correction and administrative percentages. These amendments are reviewed and approved based on the rationale provided by the local entity. Each amendment creates a new budget, however each previous budget version is kept in the grant management system for tracking. Changes in the budget and submissions of claims are time stamped to ensure timely response and processing.

A Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is required for any monitoring that results in non-compliance with federal or state regulations. A CIP may be developed when there is a history of or lack of evident improvement for negotiated targets during the competition and in the continuing years. These plans are developed in partnership with the department to ensure clarity in their actionable elements. With funding tied to performance, programs are incentivized to meet state negotiated benchmarks.

Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. Yes

2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. Yes

Certification Regarding Lobbying

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or

employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Department of Education**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Ryan M. Wise**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director and Executive Officer of the State Board of Education**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE_MAT@ed.gov

Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes
4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes
5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes
6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes

7. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303). Yes

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the instructions posted at <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc>.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) ensures that no barriers exist that could impede equitable access or participation in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of WIOA, in regard to gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. The department works in partnership with Iowa's Department of Human Rights and other key stakeholders to ensure equitable access specific to AEFLA at the state and local level, described below and pledges to adhere and devote ongoing attention to each of these areas.

Gender: The department ensures that all genders will be equitably recruited and served through AEFLA. The department will work with providers to ensure strategies are implemented to recruit and serve participants to achieve a proportional representation of male and female participants according to the service area demographics.

National origin/race/color: The department requires local applicants to detail their experience in serving participants from diverse cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Applications and status updates from providers ensure a continued commitment to recruit and serve eligible individuals from diverse populations (national origin, race, color) and that all activities, program components and published materials will remain free of bias of national origin, race, and color. Additionally, the department will ensure at the state and local level that staff, and volunteers are representative of the target population of the participants being served. Guidance and examples of written material that is culturally sensitive and provided in other languages to recruit and serve participants, if needed, to eliminate language barriers that may exist, has been provided by the department.

Disability: The department ensures that providers will ensure equitable access to all AEFLA activities and facilities as detailed by the application process with specific state standards and reviewed annually. Each applicant pledges to serve participants, regardless of disability. The department will provide trainings to assist providers and staff strategies to ensure that all activities and published materials will be free of bias regarding disabilities. To further ensure that disabled individuals have equitable access to the program, all providers pledge to make any reasonable accommodation needed by disabled participants to ensure their full and equitable participation in AEFLA activities. In addition to this and in compliance with the GEPA and WIOA Section 188, the department in partnership with one-stop partners, where applicable, ensures that all entrances, restrooms, offices are accessible to individuals with disabilities in order to ensure their equal access in AEFLA activities.

Age: The department ensures that all participants of eligible age will be served and have equitable access to participate in all AEFLA activities based on need while ensuring that all

programs and published materials will be free of bias regarding age. Additionally, the providers will offer age-appropriate activities and materials, including reading materials, for participants.

The department pledges to operate the AEFLA, Title II, WIOA activities as described above, to ensure equitable access and participation in regards to gender, race, national origin, color, and disability. Furthermore, the department will ensure that providers will address recruitment, intake, participation, and hiring practices, in compliance with GEPA, in the following manner:

Recruitment: Funded providers will ensure that AEFLA staff will recruit ALL eligible participants and not discriminate on gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. The local administrator will ensure any promotional material is not bias and is available in alternative format, including languages, as regionally necessary and available to all individuals. If individuals are in need of assistance to complete an application, staff will provide assistance and if needed, make arrangements for accommodations.

Intake: The local administrator will involve other AEFLA staff personnel in the intake process for eligible individuals. Interviews, advising and assessments will be conducted with all eligible individuals to discuss and assess the educational needs and goals while addressing any questions about the services provided. The local provider will use information gained during the intake process to place eligible individuals in appropriate AEFLA activities regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (in compliance with GEPA).

Participation: All providers will ensure that entrances, restrooms, offices, and facilities are totally accessible to individuals with disabilities to ensure their equal access to the program. All individuals will be able to participate in all AEFLA activities regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

Hiring Process of Local Provider Staff: The department promotes equal employment opportunities and the fair treatment of employees without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, or sexual preference in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. All providers are required to be an equal opportunity employer. In adhering to this, providers will ensure equal opportunity hiring guidelines to ensure equal access in employment to all who apply for a position using AEFLA funds.

The department is committed to adhering to these standards and practices and will make all provisions necessary to ensure that this plan is in compliance with the General Education and Provisions Act (GEPA).

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

The State Rehabilitation Council is a working advisory board providing guidance, direction and recommendations to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) met eight times within the program years of 2016 and 2017 and parts of 2018, including three legislative receptions. During each SRC meeting, IVRS provides the following information to SRC members: Administrative Report, Financial Overview, Rehabilitation Services Update, State Plan and Independent Living Update, Legal Update, and the Iowa Client Assistance Program (CAP) report. SRC members are provided updates related to IVRS progress on state plan goals, objectives and strategies. The initial SRC structure consisted of three subgroups committees that included Outreach, Planning and Evaluation and Finance. In 2017, the Planning and Evaluation Committee became "VR Service Delivery." Prior members serving on the Finance subgroup were integrated into VR Service Delivery or the Outreach Committee. SRC bylaws were revised during this period. This effort involved a great deal of both collaboration and research between Council members and IVRS staff. For members new to the Council, IVRS provides an overview of SRC responsibilities and member manuals to SRC representatives. The manual includes sections that will be helpful to those new to the world of "SRC/Vocational Rehabilitation" such as: abbreviations/acronyms; SRC bylaws; the IVRS statewide directory; SRC member listing; government reports; and information about travel payments. New members are instructed on navigating the SRC webpage and where to obtain meeting agenda, minutes and handouts, as well as additional SRC information. IVRS is developing short video scripts that could serve as orientation resources and be watched from a remote location. IVRS administration provides regular updates to SRC members with regard to changes required by WIOA legislation, some of which necessitated changes in IVRS policy. IVRS continues to solicit input from the SRC prior to policy changes. A representative from the Rehabilitation Services Bureau charged with policy revisions was added to the VR Service Delivery subgroup in 2018. Per feedback from the SRC, IVRS revised how policies were developed and communicated. This revision led to the development of the Coordinating Council, which is a staff-driven model for review of policies and procedures. The work developed by the Council is shared with the SRC prior to implementation. SRC members are provided with information specific to WIOA and progress in the development of Iowa's Unified State Plan. Several meetings featured speakers specific to WIOA and the state workforce board structure, including the impact and integration with VR service delivery. Disability Access Committees (DAC) have been established in each of the 15 workforce regions. They are currently assessing facility accessibility for persons with disabilities as well as accessibility to services and programs. The SRC is informed of ongoing issues with accessibility from SRC representative Page Eastin of the Iowa Client Assistance Program (CAP). IVRS and the SRC recognize that persons with disabilities are an overlooked group with unmet

employment needs. IVRS staff serve on the Future Ready Iowa Work Group and reports back to SRC on this group's efforts to achieve the Governor's goals. Information was shared from the statewide committee for the Iowa National Governor's Association (NGA), which is integrating work-based learning opportunities for Iowans. The NGA awarded a grant to the State of Iowa to scale work-based learning to connect Iowa's youth with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) middle skill careers. The grant provides a written agreement of structured activities for secondary transition services. This information was reflected in the Annual Report submitted to Iowa's Governor by the SRC in December. Priorities were established to expand training and awareness of work-based learning opportunities as this is a critical priority established in the Future Ready Iowa goals. This is also a key focus of Pre-Employment Transition Services and VR transition service delivery for students and youth with disabilities. Collaborative partnerships are occurring in various regions with workforce partners to identify service strategies for this population. IVRS developed a transition strategic plan to expand services for students with disabilities. Progress is occurring; as in 2016, VR served 33% of the students with a disability, and in 2017, that percentage increased to 51%. IVRS and SRC members work together to provide collective responses to incorporate policies and procedures from input received from external partners. SRC members also routinely review survey information from IVRS consumers related to their satisfaction levels with agency services. The SRC did work with Dr. Darlene Groomes, through a consultation project on quality improvement. This led to discussion on the strategic plan to focus on the following areas: Visionary Leadership; Customer Focus; Valuing Employees and partners; Managing for innovation; Management by Facts; and Focus on Results and creating value. Consistent trends that were identified include developing working relationships with business and industry, communication regarding transition initiatives, and implementing the use of technology to increase field staff efficiencies. Other activities in which the SRC helps IVRS advance its goals and mission involve Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). The SRC has supported IVRS initiatives such as Future Ready Iowa, Intermediary Network contracts, Making the Grade, Transition Alliance Programs, Project Search programs, STEM Career Camps, TEAM (Transitioning to Employment and Advocating for Myself), iJAG (Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates) have been supported. IVRS staff also informed SRC members of work being done with the Microsoft training academy to help job candidates seeking credentialing in Microsoft products. SRC members are provided quarterly updates about Iowa's progress in the Employment First initiative. Iowa is the lead agency with the Department of Labor Office of Disability and Employment Policy Employment First project. As part of Iowa's 2017 Employment First plan, there was a focus in Ottumwa, Iowa, in partnership with the South Central Behavioral Health Region. Priority areas involved provider transformation and staff capacity for four targeted providers and building networking skills for the region in the area of business engagement. A similar initiative is currently underway in two other parts of the state (Des Moines and Cedar Rapids) with a focus on improving staff capacity. SRC members were informed about IVRS' new grant initiative with Nebraska, with a focus on the Sioux City/Council Bluffs corridor. Iowa VR supported a grant that garnered RSA funding. Staff will be hired to look at closed cases of job candidates in these areas: health care, engineering, transportation and logistics, and advanced manufacturing. The plan is for VR to upgrade these candidate's skill levels and create a pathway to fill with new job candidates providing advanced credentialing to further career advancement. SRC members also supported communication with the Omaha Indian Tribe of Nebraska and the development of a MOA to foster collaboration with

our common job candidates. Recent guest speakers at the SRC ranged from representatives from the IVRS Self-Employment and Independent Living programs, to the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment (ICIE). ICIE is a consortium which includes representatives from the Iowa Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council, Iowa Department of Education, IVRS, the Department of Human Services, other state and county personnel, community rehabilitation program representatives, case managers, parents/family members, as well as individuals with disabilities. ICIE continues efforts to complement the work of the Council. A contract was executed between IVRS and ICIE to include support of coalition meetings, monthly Community Of Practice calls, and informing the SRC of information pertinent to the statewide needs assessment. The priority focus for ICIE has been to gather information to bring to the SRC Outreach Committee for their review; with discussion pertaining to VR service delivery issues observed statewide. At the request of the SRC Outreach committee, ICIE developed a survey to solicit feedback from Iowa stakeholders. The focus of the survey was to glean stakeholder input on their satisfaction with employment services from IVRS. ICIE received 355 responses, with significant feedback. The survey results provided a good balance of what was going well and what could be improved. At the September 2017 meeting, the Outreach committee reviewed the survey and developed recommendations. There were clear trends identified relating to gaps in service delivery pertaining to: collaborative partnering - especially with school districts, confusion on referral and application processes, difficulty with job candidates understanding the full range of service opportunities available, and the quality/consistency of the services across the state. These were identified as immediate priorities and training and communication was given to supervisors and field offices. Each area office is developing a transition school-to-work plan with their schools in the district; state level staff are working towards training with AEAs and local school districts on roles and responsibilities; and a new MOA was completed with the Iowa Department of Education

2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

IVRS has excellent communication with the Council and engages in regular feedback and updates. Council members receive weekly updates that are sent to all IVRS staff by IVRS administration. Discussion times are included in SRC meetings providing for opportunities to openly respond to questions and concerns. Council sub-committees meet prior to each Council meeting with IVRS staff representatives providing further opportunity for input and recommendations flowing from the Council to IVRS. Lunch and Learn meetings are held at each Council meeting providing for education and understanding of common interest area topics. SRC members are provided an overview of IVRS policy, procedures, fiscal reports, agency updates, satisfaction with services provision, and operational information through the year. Quality assurance plans and performance measures for IVRS staff are reviewed, along with appeal information. Copies of all IVRS reports and SRC discussion materials are included on the IVRS website, with a link to the SRC. Significant changes occurred with SRC input for implementation of a new post-secondary training policy that moved towards a more equitable expenditure of funds per informed choice, as well as financial need. Changes also were made to streamline the referral and application process, and revise how agency policies and procedures are determined.

3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

None noted. Specific recommendations were made during the last SRC meeting on the following: VR SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE Proposed Recommendations to IVRS The VR Service Delivery Committee reviewed data compiled by IVRS on rehabilitation rates of the following disability types: Intellectual Disability, Psychiatric Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Data from 2013-2017 was compared and rehab rates were lowest for all of those populations in 2017. Intellectual Disabilities Potential Cause: Employment First • IVRS is serving more people. • Individuals who elect to work in sheltered workshops are closed in Status 28. • More individuals have had failed attempts at competitive integrated employment. • These numbers include people referred from sheltered workshops who don't really want to work in the community. Potential Recommendations: • Decrease caseload size by increasing waiting list to allow more intensive services to MSD job candidates. • Provide more intensive Career Counseling to individuals employed at subminimum wage. Psychiatric Disabilities Potential Causes: • Staff are not adequately trained to work with this population. • Staff are not able to provide services as quickly as job candidates need/want. • Lack of CRPs specializing in providing supported employment to this population. • Secondary dx tend to become the primary disability, especially with aging population. Potential Recommendations: • Add graduate program training at Drake. • Train staff on job accommodations for individuals with psychiatric disabilities using JAN. • Train staff and CRP staff (train the trainer). • Explore IPS Model. Autism Spectrum Disorder Potential Causes: • OJT and Apprenticeships are underutilized but can be especially useful with this population (staff report that OJT paperwork is too bulky). • There is an increase in the number of job candidates with ASD and will continue to rise so outcomes will be impacted. • Staff are not comfortable serving individuals with ASD due to behaviors. Potential Recommendations: • Poll staff to measure comfort level serving job candidates with ASD and knowledge of potential accommodations. • Poll staff to gather feedback on OJT paperwork/process. • Training for staff and CRP staff. • Find out how many OJTs were authorized last year and review the process. • Share job analyses between all staff and partner agency staff in centralized, easy to access location i.e. Google Drive. Deaf/Hard of Hearing Potential Causes: • No staff serving the Deaf community are fluent in ASL. • There is a shortage of ASL interpreters in Iowa. • More closures in Status 28. Potential Recommendations: • Identify area offices with higher numbers of Deaf Iowans and add ASL selective to job postings (Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo). • Require continuing education training for select staff to learn ASL (recommended one staff person per region). • Training for Staff on cultural competency. Other Potential Recommendations to IVRS: • Consider a more intensive career exploration/discovery program for individuals on the waiting list that would be facilitated by AJC field staff. Similar to "potentially eligible" services but administered through IWD while the individual waits for intensive VR services. • Goal to ensure that IVRS is making exceptions to policy to meet individual needs. Each of these were discussed in the committee meetings and the SRC in general, in addition to IVRS managers. Specific actions were agreed upon by the committee and IVRS following the discussion and although not inclusive of all the items in the draft, there was consensus in the immediate next steps to be performed. A focus should continue in relationship to the engagement between job candidates and IVRS. Staff should review information on services that help advance gainful employment. Strategies are shared by local VR office teams regarding information and referral to workforce partners, along with supervisory review of cases not leading to employment. Strategies are currently implemented in a variety of areas including Employment First operations, trainings for mental illness in collaboration with partners, policy changes supporting transitional employment for those with mental illness, and a

developing partnership with Northwest Community College on skill training for individuals with autism. An internal work group was formed to further assess service delivery for individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. IVRS currently has a contract with the Iowa School for the Deaf, representation on the statewide policy team, and three staff proficient in ASL with seven more indicating some degree of comfort in serving this population. The IVRS case management system is in constant development to meet the needs of the WIOA legislation. It is planned to move forward with capturing job analysis performed through a shared drive, as well as developing an internal mechanism to track exceptions and use that information as part of our QA program. VR uses contracted providers such as OWEP, TAP, Making the Grade, etc. to create alignment of services and help with capacity so services are delivered statewide and serve as many individuals as possible. Contracts with ICIE on the subminimum wage is another example of IVRS efforts to expand capacity in an area of limited funding. IVRS' continued focus on individuals with intellectual disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, those on the autism spectrum, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations are examples of the value of input and work of SRC members, and their influence on agency services.

b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

Waiver Continuations and New Requests: IVRS has a number of third party cooperative agreements with school districts. IVRS Third Party Cooperative Arrangement verify that project funds provided from the school district are certified as non-federal dollars. IVRS continues to review and approve all services under this arrangement for purposes of maintaining administrative control for program and fiscal responsibilities of the Third Party Cooperative Arrangement. IVRS also certifies that the order of selection policy is applied to individuals receiving services under the agreements and all provisions of applicant status apply as appropriate. All intensive services provided are under an approved IPE and authorized by the responsible IVRS counselor. Effective with the passage of WIOA and the development of policy, potentially eligible students will be able to benefit from the pre-employment transition services in these agreements. 1. Project Search: IVRS requests a continuation of the waiver of statewideness for Project Search which was approved by RSA in the FY2014 state plan. As part of the approval process, IVRS completed an analysis to confirm that Project Search services provided under the TPCA were not currently provided by the school district to students with disabilities. Project Search primarily serves the most significantly disabled and IVRS promotes this as an opportunity for students to achieve competitive, community integrated employment. IVRS third-party Project Search programs were established in Des Moines and in Waterloo serving their respective school districts. Service outcomes include the participating youth to obtain training that is necessary to gain marketable skills to enhance their ability to secure competitive employment. This goal is achieved by offering participating youth real-life work experiences, combined with training in employability and independent living skills, to help make successful transition from school to productive adult life. Independent living and social/life skills are addressed to ensure compatibility and fit for work readiness and daily living activities. IVRS

also partners with ten other Project Search programs across the State of Iowa. Project Search is a career pathway on the job-training program for the most significantly disabled student and provides training in STEM-related careers when it is part of a high school program.

Collaborative efforts include referral, service provision and funding. These training programs have demonstrated effectiveness in bridging the gap through providing work place immersion with education/employment supports for individuals with the most significant barriers to employment. IVRS is also involved with other Project Search Programs, but they are not providing any non-federal share of costs and are third party cooperative agreements. 2.

Transition Alliance Program: The Transition Alliance Program (TAP), which RSA approved in 1997 under a Waiver of Statewideness, continues to be explored in other areas of Iowa as program success rates are statistically high. TAP is jointly funded by a school district and IVRS. Each TAP provides Pre-ETS and enhanced transitional services to eligible IVRS clients who require year-round support up to age 25. All TAP contracts include information related to Order of Selection/IVRS Wait List, and outline non-federal provisions and match dollars accordingly. TAP services are provided through a service coordination model with a goal of obtaining competitive employment and successful IVRS closure (status 26) for eligible students and youth. TAP does not replace existing education or transition services to youth that are mandated under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While the school district may assign personnel who provide services covered by the IDEA to provide services, the school district must carefully separate and document the hours and services provided by such personnel under the TAP program. IVRS is currently involved in thirteen TAP contracts in Iowa. IVRS confirms that the requirements of the VR services portion of our Unified State Plan will apply to the services under the waiver. IVRS also certifies that the order of selection policy is applied to individuals receiving Project Search, and TAP services under this waiver. All non-federal share of costs are provided by a local public agency. Current TAP programs are: Ankeny School District, Ankeny, Iowa Burlington School District, Burlington, Iowa Cedar Falls School District, Cedar Falls, Iowa Cedar Rapids School District, Cedar Rapids, Iowa Charles City School District, Charles City, Iowa Council Bluffs School District, Council Bluffs, Iowa Dubuque School District, Dubuque, Iowa Fort Dodge School District, Fort Dodge, Iowa Galva Holstein TAP serving the school districts of Galva-Holstein, Boyden-Hull, Cherokee Community Schools, West Lyon Community Schools, Odebolt-Arthur-Battle Creek-Ida Grove Schools, Central Lyon Schools, Sioux Center Community Schools, Rock Valley Community Schools, Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn schools. Monticello School District, Midland School District, Monticello, Iowa Mt. Ayr School District, Mt. Ayr, Iowa Sergeant Bluff-Luton School Districts, Sergeant Bluff, Iowa Sioux City School District, Sioux City, Iowa Waterloo School District, Waterloo, Iowa

2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

Agreed.

3. All State plan requirements will apply

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

IVRS maintains compliance with the Order of Selection and assures that all services provided under the waiver with the Unified State Plan meet this requirement.

c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

IVRS has been involved in cooperative relationships with many federal, state and local agencies and programs for many years. These include:

1. Veterans Administration — IVRS has a long-standing agreement with the VA. This agreement spells out the referral process; which agency will be responsible for specific services; the inclusion of each other's employees in staff development activities; and the identification of key liaison individuals.

2. Department of Human Services — This is a general agreement between DHS and IVRS, which allows and encourages interaction between the two agencies for individuals for whom both provide services. It relates to referrals, joint planning, office space, shared funding and related activities. An IVRS staff person is a required member of the Iowa Mental Health Planning Council, a group that represents a cross-section of constituencies and interest groups. Over 50% of its members must be consumers, family members, advocates, and others who are not state employees or providers. The duties of the Council are to advocate for adults with a serious mental illness and children with a serious emotional disorder and to monitor, review, and evaluate the allocation and adequacy of mental health services within the State.

3. The Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) — is a collaborative group of state, federal and private partners working together to identify, develop and mobilize resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring persons with disabilities. EDRN Partners include Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Iowa Department for the Blind; Deaf Services; Division of Persons with Disabilities; Veterans Administration; Social Security Administration; Iowa Workforce Development; U.S. Small Business Administration/SCORE; Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa. EDRN provides Iowa employers with access to qualified applicants, enhances the available labor market by combining on-the-job training, internships and classroom experiences for high-demand occupations, and serves as a resource for up-to-date information about disability employment issues for the business community.

4. Developmental Disabilities Council — the IVRS attorney currently serves on the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council. The DD Council's focus is to arm those affected by disability with the information, skills and confidence to stand up and take action; to offer solutions, and be a driving force for the change they want to see.

5. Iowa Transportation Coordination Council — IVRS is also a team member on the Iowa Transportation Coordination Council. Chaired by staff from the Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Public Transit, the ITCC meets every other month to discuss such issues as mobility management, accessibility of transportation in Iowa, State Transit Assistance Special Project Proposal applications pertaining to coordination, and the encouragement of state and local agency involvement in the passenger transportation planning process. Having grown considerably from the three original member state departments, the ITCC now boasts membership from statewide organizations, state departments, and federal groups.

6. LifeLong Links — last year, IVRS established an agreement to serve as a member of LLL. The common goal shared by IVRS and LifeLong Links is improving the lives of consumers in the aging and disability communities.

7. Future Ready Iowa — is a commitment for collaboration with a variety of stakeholders to help close the skills gap by better aligning our education, economic development and workforce development initiatives. Future Ready Iowa establishes a shared vision and goal that 70% of Iowans in the workforce will have education and training beyond high school by 2025. The Future Ready Iowa Alliance will help accelerate this important work. There is a need for programmatic and messaging alignment. The communication directors of the relevant agencies have begun coordinating on messaging.

8. Intermediary Networks — were established with funding from IVRS in collaboration with the Department of Education to Community College regions to develop and expand work-based learning opportunities. Funds were used to hire staff to prepare students with disabilities for the workforce by connecting students, the education system, business and the community through relevant, work-based learning activities across all 16-career clusters, with specific emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM). The goal of an Intermediary Network is to work with students with disabilities and align their career interests to post-secondary education, as appropriate. The long-term results are positioning students for successful career attainment and increase work-based learning opportunities for this targeted population.

9. Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) — worked with IVRS to hire an Employment Specialist within the Area Agencies of Aging Centers. This position helps further integrate Iowa Workforce services through Iowa's Skilled Employment Initiative for employment in the Iowa economy focused on the mid-skill areas. The AAAs have been designated as Aging & Disability Resource Centers in each of their regions and bridge the gaps that currently exist for this population of IVRS job candidates.

10. Making the Grade — Making the Grade is an employment program designed to provide students in high school the opportunity to obtain part-time employment after school and during the summer. The program facilitates understanding of the work habits and behaviors necessary to be employed, while obtaining a paid job that can produce references and skill sets to draw upon after high school. Students with disabilities, including students covered under Section 511, who are receiving services from Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services under an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) may participate in the program. The program is about reaching school districts with limited services to assist students in obtaining competitive community employment, and serving those individuals who are already eligible and in need of an employment service due to gaps in the current system. Year-round services are provided after school and in the summer as part of Making the Grade.

11. Iowa Jobs for America Graduates (iJAG) — A project was developed through Boone Community School District to partner in the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities utilizing the framework of the iJAG program. Boone Community School District began implementing an innovative learning project focused on a work-based learning continuum of awareness (early years), exploration (middle years) and training (high school) in partnership with a variety of employers and higher education institutions. The school district is piloting a Quality Pre-Apprenticeship, building on grades 10-12 work-based learning experiences. They offer semester-length, project based opportunities through the School Career Connections and vocational rehabilitation programs. Initial efforts developed plumbing and electrical field opportunities with Kruck Plumbing and Heating Co. (a Registered Apprenticeship program) and ABC of Iowa Apprenticeship and Training Trust. Our goal is to expand these options with the further growth of experiential learning opportunities and community apprenticeship partners over time.

The above description is an example of the initiatives being offered by the school district to expand work-based experiential learning to all students. The Innovative Learning Coordinator at Boone High School, through collaboration with the principal and other teachers, identified gaps in access to the continuum projects for certain levels of students. This specific project is a new program expanding opportunities for students with disabilities. One hundred percent of the focus of this project is on students with disabilities served through the Boone Community School District who are eligible for services through an IEP or 504 plan. Boone Community School District will provide these services through a sub-contract with the Iowa Jobs for America Graduates Program (iJAG). The staff specialist for the project will track their time through a daily Personnel Allocation Report. IVRS staff are coordinating service delivery efforts and monitoring progress.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

IVRS has agreements with Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Program, the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology (I-PAT), the Center for Disabilities and Development (CDD) and the University of Iowa Health Care for providing assistive technology and assistive technology services, or administrating staff training to such services. Services include referrals, exchange of information, services provided in collaboration, staff development, and strategies for coordination and collaboration.

3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

Iowa is considered a rural state and IVRS has service efforts occurring in rural areas across the state including work with our agriculture industry with specific program initiatives with farmers who have disabilities. This is a collaborative effort through the Center for Disabilities and Development, the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology and the Easter Seal FARM program. It is recognized that the USDA could be a valued partner that has been underutilized in current efforts. Communication will occur within this state plan regarding the goal of coordinating training and strategy development regarding gaps of service delivery that will identified through communication with the USDA. At the current time, there is no existing agreement with the Department of Agriculture.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

IVRS works closely with Regional Workforce Boards and the Iowa Workforce Development Board in coordinating services and supports for out-of-school youth. An agreement providing data exchange and the sharing of safe data information has been established between IVRS with the Iowa Workforce Development

5. State use contracting programs.

IVRS maintains compliance with state contracting programs and follows the Iowa Department of Administrative rules for financial bidding and contracting. We maintain contract agreements through the State of Iowa's Master Purchasing Agreements and do not have individual agreements with state use programs.

d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

1. DSU's plans

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

WIOA requires that 15% of the budget be allocated towards the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. IVRS has developed policy surrounding the provision of Pre-ETS service delivery. Each school district in Iowa is to develop a collaborative plan coordinated with IVRS that addresses the service gaps at that particular school, and responsibilities for who will deliver the service(s). IVRS staff have access to students in the schools in order to provide quality services and schools are recognizing the value that IVRS brings. The goal of these efforts is for each student with a disability to become aware of the Pre-ETS services available to them and is able to receive those services from IVRS or a comparable service. Efforts to coordinate delivery of transition services with our education partners are occurring. A series of training webinars are occurring in the spring of 2018 to assist in local education agencies and school districts as well as IVRS staff having common knowledge of terms and definitions pertaining to instructional training, job coaching, and extended school year supports. The goal being that students, whether potentially eligible or eligible, leave high school prepared to pursue post-secondary training and/or employment. IVRS has laid the groundwork for the expansion of relationships within the Department of Education, Area Education Agencies, and Local Education Agencies. IVRS is seeking alternative ways to provide Pre-ETS through expansion of relationships and third-party contracts. During 2016 - 2017, contracts were implemented by IVRS at 14 of Iowa's 15 community colleges, specifically targeting service delivery for secondary school students with disabilities under an IEP or 504 plan. The focus of these contracts provided Intermediary Network (IN) staff tasked with increasing work-based learning opportunities for this targeted population. This initiative was developed through a collaboration with the Iowa Department of Education and the Community Colleges Division. Contracts with LEAs, INs and Community Rehabilitation Programs have created partnerships that allow for expansion of Pre-ETS delivery at the local level, and increase IVRS' capacity to provide quality services. IVRS has a current

Memorandum of Agreement within the Department of Education. This MOA outlines shared responsibilities between IVRS and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to prepare students with disabilities for successful competitive integrated employment. Through this Agreement, IVRS has ready access to a student's IEPs who are on the IVRS caseload, which allows for timely development of the IVRS eligibility justification (within 60 days), and the individual plan for employment (within 90 days) and prior to the exit of high school. This Memorandum of Agreement expands beyond the previous agreement and provides greater direction and support to local IEP teams. This agreement describes roles and responsibilities of both agencies, and also assigns financial obligations. This agreement was amended in 2017 to identify the manner in which schools address their responsibilities to students in special education programs under WIOA. (A copy of the MOA is available on the IVRS website.)

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

Local Education Agencies (LEA — This is the formal term for local school districts). IVRS has developed arrangements with local school districts regarding referrals, accessing students in schools, participating in IEP staffings, providing Pre-Employment Transition Services, serving eligible students/youth as well as potentially eligible students, and various other activities.

Every Iowa high school has an IVRS counselor formally assigned to serve that school. IVRS counselors can provide consultation that includes information and referral assistance to benefit job candidates who are eligible but awaiting services from IVRS.

Iowa also has a team member serve on the Special Education Advisory Panel, which discusses outcomes and policies related to students and youth in transition. The purpose of IVRS involvement is to connect with schools for transition, provide guidance on policy development and strategies for student outcomes, while also providing information that impacts the most significantly disabled students and youth as related to Section 511 of WIOA.

IVRS also coordinates efforts with statewide resources such as the Iowa Family and Educator Partnership (FEP) and ASK Resources (Access to Special Kids). IVRS is also involved with ASK Resources and the Special Education Directors in developing literature and trainings for parents pertaining to Section 511 (WIOA).

The implementation of service delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services to potentially eligible students has created an excellent opportunity to collaborate with secondary education professionals, as well as staff from other core programs with a vested interest in service to this demographic. Engagement in Pre-ETS affords students with disabilities the opportunity to identify a vocational goal, structure their curriculum to prepare for acceptance in post-secondary training, and eventually acquire employment that meets their future financial needs.

B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

Section 511 of WIOA helps ensure students in special education have opportunities for the following: discover options of competitive integrated work that would be of interest; assessment and work experiences in the community; and employment services so a student is competitively employed or pursuing higher education or training by high school graduation. Services such as Discovery, Career Exploration, Work Readiness and Work Adjustment are examples of services that IVRS may arrange with community providers depending on a student's needs. While coordination efforts are currently occurring, there continues to be a need for further discussions and education to steer schools' focus from facility-based employment towards the Employment First philosophy. IVRS is tracking individuals who select to enter into segregated employment to ensure they receive the required career counseling and information and referral services. Protocols were developed and implemented by July 2016 to address this requirement for individuals earning sub-minimum wages. Collaboration Transition Protocol (CTP) is a process that was developed by IVRS, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Area Education Agencies (AEA), and implemented throughout Iowa. In 2015, the CTP process was redesigned and re-named "Collaborative Outcomes for Employing Students" to move the focus away from IVRS eligibility and toward improving collaboration at the local level to achieve outcomes. While IVRS has demonstrated through the CTP that students were linked with IVRS and determined eligible with 100% accuracy, the outcomes in terms of employment were disappointing (status 30s were significant). The process changed from being offered to select schools to being available to all high school districts in Iowa. The new process expanded local control over the plans on how to improve collaboration between our agencies and achieve outcomes for students. IVRS staff are housed on community college campuses and have ready access to students, youth and faculty. In a few settings, staff are provided space to use when they regularly visit the campus, since they do not have permanent office space available. In many Community Colleges, space has been allocated for a Rehabilitation Associate or a Counselor, and they are members of the disability resources on campus. This co-location and collaboration creates greater conduits for transition as job candidates have ready access to IVRS staff. Specific IVRS staff are assigned to each of the three Regents Universities in Iowa. Staff have ready access to job candidates, faculty and administration in these settings. IVRS leadership have participated in the National Governor's Association Work-Based Learning grant and provided active input through work committees and serving on the state Future Ready Iowa Leadership Board. A number of final recommendations were adopted that specifically involves outreach to students, youth and adults with disabilities. The following work-based learning recommendations for Future Ready Iowa have a direct impact on transition planning. 1. Expand high-quality work-based learning experiences in high-demand fields and careers for all students, particularly traditionally underrepresented students. 2. Increase K-12 quality pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, internships and other employer-driven, work-based learning programs that bridge to postsecondary opportunities. This should include expanded summer programs. 3. Business professionals and teachers design authentic hands-on work-based learning to create more connections between school and employers for both students and teachers (teacher externships - improve specific content knowledge, such as math). 4. Leverage current examples, including the Governor's STEM Advisory Council Program called Businesses Engaging Students and Teachers (BEST), and work-based learning intermediary networks. 5. Ensure equity in access across Iowa, in urban and rural areas and all grades through a statewide clearinghouse of work-based learning experiences when local partnerships are unavailable. 6. Explore the need for additional funding for expanding work-based learning opportunities. 7.

School counselors should be trained in career development. Remove non-counseling duties to increase time and focus on career development with K-12 students. 8. At every opportunity, integrate employability skills/non-cognitive skills/social-emotional learning. 9. Identify and scale effective early academic and career development and delivery approaches so all students are prepared for a changing world. 10. Focus on high-quality instruction based on Iowa's academic standards (which include both content and 21st century skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, writing and communication), especially for high-need and underserved students, and on closing achievement gaps. 11. Bolster the 21st century skills component of Iowa's state academic standards to encourage teachers to incorporate career information into the classroom. 12. Expand volunteer mentoring, after-school programs and other initiatives designed to support disadvantaged students with emphasis on high-demand career exploration and development. 13. Utilize Iowa's new College and Career Readiness definition, which is a roadmap for meeting the Future Ready Iowa goal. This is important to ensure early awareness of career choices and sustainability of the Future Ready Iowa plan beyond 2025.

C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Iowa Department of Education both share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful community employment. As referenced, a current Memorandum of Agreement defines the responsibilities of both divisions. This MOA is designed to facilitate the integration and coordination of transition services from school to post-secondary education and/or employment for individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in secondary education, and are eligible or potentially eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services.

A vocational rehabilitation counselor or other staff member work in concert with educational agencies designated by the DE to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities. Examples of these services include: tours of universities and vocational training programs, employer or business site visits to learn about career opportunities, career fairs coordinated with AEAs and Workforce Development partners, mock interviews, resume writing, job exploration counseling, workplace readiness, work-based learning, counseling on opportunities at post-secondary institutions, self-advocacy, and other general services applicable to groups of students with disabilities or youth with disabilities. Educators may request consultation and technical assistance services from IVRS when needed to plan for individual transition needs, including development of the individual's course of study. Educators may consult with IVRS regarding the individual's impediments to employment and provide all information available.

IVRS counselors and educators are both responsible for the development and completion of the employment component of a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) in concert with the student, the parents, and the IEP team. IVRS involvement in the IEP development and completion is determined by individual student need - not student age or grade.

Students, who require more intensive services in order to learn, understand and apply the information from Pre-ETS activities, are encouraged to submit an application for IVRS. Intense services may not be provided without the student having been determined eligible and served under an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).

IVRS staff review information for students who submit an application for services, and AEAs/LEAs share existing information, which assists IVRS in determining a student's eligibility. If needed, students participate in additional assessment(s) to determine eligibility services. The scheduling of these assessment(s) involve collaboration between IVRS, LEA and AEA staff members.

Once an eligibility determination is made by IVRS, that decision is shared with the LEA and AEA staff. This information is considered as part of the student's transition plan within the IEP.

IVRS counselors develop an IPE for each individual determined to be eligible for IVRS within 90 days of being removed from the IVRS waiting list. The student, parents, educators, and IVRS counselors collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and VR's IPE are consistent with one another.

Each division is responsible for the costs incurred as part of their responsibilities under the current MOA.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

All school personnel, including school nurses, are able to share educational information of students with disabilities, including electronic access to IEPs, when appropriate and necessary for IVRS services. This includes referrals to IVRS. Similarly, the IVRS staff share relevant information about students with disabilities when appropriate and necessary to facilitate the integration and coordination of transition services from school to post-secondary education and/or employment. IVRS staff have access to relevant special education data and related systems in order to ease provision and documentation of services. Expansion of transition service efforts continue to be a priority. IVRS developed a Transition Plan specific to implementation of Pre-Employment Transition Services. The 2015/2016 student count from the Department of Education identified 21,913 students receiving special education services or being served under a 504 plan. For the 218 school year, IVRS received the Department of Education numbers in December 2017, which reflect a slight change in overall numbers of students with disabilities to be 22,047. The following table demonstrates the student count used for 2017 as reported on 10/30/16: Grade Level IEP 504 9th Grade 4,656 942 10th Grade 4,644 973 11th Grade 4,182 953 12th Grade 4,591 972 9-12 Total 18,073 3,840 The following two tables reflect the number of students identified by IVRS who were reported as receiving services at the field level, as well as those also receiving services through the IVRS case management reporting system. Potentially Eligible Transition Students in Caseload Total Transition Students Served 2017 5,624 5,618 11,242 2016 3,484 3,701 7,185 2015 4227 4227 2014 4288 4288 The below chart shows the actual number of transition students being recorded in the IVRS case management program as receiving a required service. This number is significantly lower and reflects the documentation issues staff are having as they attempt to record services, as well as deliver services. Potentially Eligible Transition Students in Caseload Total Transition Students Served 2014 1 17 18 2015 25 100 125 2016 1612 337 1949 2017 4239 1477 5716 Student Count as Reported by the Department of Education for Program Years 12/22/17: Grade Level IEP 504 Total Student Body 9th Grade 4634 1032 37809 10th Grade 4415 1104 37241 11th Grade 4013 1155 36566 12th Grade 4540 1154 37384 Total 1760 2 4445 149000 During the 2016 school year, IVRS served 7,185 students, which was 33% of the total number of students in special education, including students on 504 plans. In considering the student body in special education or under a 504, and the number of students that IVRS served in 2017 (11,242), IVRS actually served 51% of the

students who were potentially eligible or eligible to receive services in the State of Iowa. The IVRS model of serving students which includes substantial work readiness and work orientation to students who are potentially eligible, intensive services to students who are eligible, and expanding contract initiatives to meet capacity needs, all combine to increase the number of students served in the State of Iowa. Our data review reflects a need to be consistent in use of the program year versus the federal fiscal year. Efforts were made to reflect accurate data, but we did not have a way to reflect program data years until 2017. As we move forward with reporting data, it will be transitioned from federal reporting periods to our program data years. The IVRS Transition Strategic Plan for Pre-Employment and Transition data, however, was based upon federal fiscal year data review.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

IVRS develops cooperative agreements with private, non-profit entities to provide specific services under the state plan. The non-profit organization agrees to provide funding that is used to match the federal allocation. Those funds are then awarded to the non-profit entity, consistent with state competitive procurement procedures. The funds are designated for specific services as long as they are provided to eligible IVRS clients consistent with categories of the waiting list that are receiving services. IVRS monitors programs and expenditures for compliance with existing state and federal policies.

IVRS also provides coordination efforts with our state's independent living centers and Statewide Independent Living Council. Independent living services are provided through the Administration for Community Living and have their own state plan. Some Centers offer opportunities for the provision of employment services.

IVRS has purchase of service agreements with 84 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP). These agreements provide services in the community for: Discovery, Assessment, Career Exploration, Job Shadow and Training services, Supported Employment, Work Readiness, Work Adjustment, and specific Occupational Skills development.

When the individual being served is an adult and Supported Employment is a required service, the agreement with the Department of Human Services is implemented for funding (see MOA between IVRS and the DHS). If the individual being served is a student, then IVRS supports the student in Supported Employment in accordance with the agreement with the Department of Education. Regardless of the individual being served, IVRS does not allow a delay in service if the individual is on a waiting list or beginning application for services from a comparable benefit.

When a high school student needs assistance in obtaining paid part-time work, IVRS may fund a "Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experience." This service is determined after discussion with the student's IEP team. Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experiences are for students who are Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) since they are considered career exploration services during the student's transition process; thus a component of the IEP.

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

IVRS has contractual agreements established for the provision of Supported Employment Services (SES) with various Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) in Iowa. Agency standards for services must be met for a contractual agreement to be developed between IVRS and a CRP.

Prior to arranging for Supported Employment Services, the IVRS counselor must identify funding for long-term support(s) required to maintain employment after the IVRS case file is closed. IVRS provides funding for Supported Employment Services through a shared arrangement with the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise System under DHS. IVRS also implemented the need for "Natural Supports" to be developed and available to job candidates for whom a plan for SES is written.

Job candidates, with the assistance of IVRS counselors, refer questions and service requests to the selected CRP, which determines if it has the capacity to provide answers and work in partnership with the job candidate. Reports from the CRP describe the quality indicators and benchmarks accomplished, in addition to other pertinent information necessary to enhance vocational success. The process ensure compliance with each job candidate's need to make informed choices.

IVRS utilizes a "Menu of Services" which serves as an agreement between IVRS and the CRP. Community rehabilitation providers, along with specific work groups, contributed to finalizing a manual for the Menu of Services. The focus of the Menu is on the job candidate's needs, which drive the planning, and service delivery process.

Job candidates and VR counselors determine which outcomes are needed for the job candidate in reaching the supported employment goal identified on the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). There are specific categories from which the job candidate may choose services that lead to supported employment placement and stabilization: — Discovery Services — Workplace Readiness — Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation — Career Exploration and Job Shadowing — Work Adjustment Training — Occupational Skill Training — Transportation Training — Job Development — Supported Job Coaching. Once a determination is made that SES services are required, a team meeting occurs to discuss plans for the provision of this service.

The IVRS employment services manual (Menu of Services) was revised in 2016 to reflect alignment with hourly Medicaid Service rates and related performance measures and billable units. Recent Menu revisions also took into account feedback provided by Iowa stakeholders who responded to a statewide survey and their satisfaction with services from IVRS.

Iowa VR has been the lead agency in the Employment First initiative and worked with many Iowa providers in receiving direct subject matter expertise for competitive integrated employment strategies. These efforts of provider transformation, along with monthly Community

of Practice webinars, positively impact customized employment service delivery and have increased numbers of individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD) accessing competitive integrated employment.

IVRS expanded partnerships with private vendors for specific employment services. In addition, IVRS executed a contract with the University of Iowa - Center for Disability and Development for employment services. CDD also completed their own statewide needs assessment in 2017 and we have had joint discussions regarding overlap of employment related issues. This has led to collaboration on a Kessler grant to support the use of technology in remote job coaching for select pilot sites.

g. Coordination with Employers

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR services; and

During the past two fiscal years, IVRS has continued to infuse business outreach activities into local and state plans resulting in strengthened business relationships statewide. These relationships enhance the IVRS counselor's understanding of business expectations, and are directly connected to the planning process with consumers. It has been found that by increasing employer involvement throughout the rehabilitation process, job candidates have better information to make informed choice decisions on their career plans. An additional result is a broader range of employment opportunities available.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to serving business and industry as a valued customer and in the past year, demonstrated this commitment through a wide range of activities and service delivery.

In FFY17, IVRS focused on training - not only for internal staff but also Iowa workforce partners and community rehabilitation providers. It is important when serving business and industry that everyone unites to meet business needs. IVRS training focuses on the importance of a business relationship and meeting business needs with our job candidates, versus just making placements that do not result in long-term employment.

Training begins with a business intake to learn about the business, then moves to a job analysis/task analysis so that recommendations can be made to help the business. This training is done classroom style, as well as in the business community; learning by doing with mentoring.

Because of training, staff and partners have learned the value of the job analysis, which has helped in making a better employment match for job candidates. Both IVRS staff and community partners have completed more job analyses since being trained. IVRS has had seen successful customized outcomes as a result of staff doing a better analysis with Iowa businesses! This is reflected in the actual employment outcome per the feedback of success stories from a job candidate. In several cases, the business has been willing to share their story and the value of the employment partnership. Videos outlining successful customized employment outcomes have been featuring Plastic Professionals, Omega Industries, Winnebago Industries, T & D Repair,

Progress Industries and Kwik Trip as examples of customized employment value. These examples also share the value of the service delivery from the job candidate perspective.

When staff implement the job analysis process, potential solutions begin to emerge. For example, one business was using skilled laborers to make boxes. By hiring a separate person to make boxes, the business actually saved money since it was not a skilled position. Keeping skilled workers on the line doing production allowed the business to have less production loss and pay workers in accordance to their duties. Through hiring a person to make the boxes, an opportunity was created for a job candidate who did not have the skills to work on the line but wanted to work in advanced manufacturing. This is one of many examples that IVRS has used to create opportunities for job candidates. Additionally, these analyses are perfect ways to introduce our job candidates into the careers they may be considering, in order to help them make an informed choice.

The IVRS Business Consultant has been involved in training staff at many levels; including state, regional and national conferences and webinars. In-person trainings include Iowa Association of Providers conference and the Iowa APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First) conference. National webinar trainings include: Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) on Reverse Job Fairs; Work-Based Learning webinar and Community-Business-School relationships sponsored by NTACT (National Transition Assistance Center on Transition); Cornell University's Employer Engagement: Meeting Business Needs, Adding Value; and ODEP's (Office of Disability Policy) webinar on Increasing Employer Engagement, in partnership with the IVRS administrator. This has increased visibility of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation business engagement efforts and resulted in IVRS earning a reputation as a proactive and innovative partner.

Additionally, IVRS' Business Consultant had an opportunity to participate in a financial literacy Train-the-Trainer program sponsored by the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) and CFPB (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau). Once trained, IVRS staff held a training in Des Moines for internal staff, Center for Independent Living staff and VR regional staff. The Business Consultant also partnered with CSAVR (Council of State Administration of Vocational Rehabilitation) to provide this training to VR nationally.

The Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) has been designed to increase the employment of persons with disabilities by pooling agency resources and providing technical expertise to employers throughout Iowa. Members of this group include staff from IVRS, the Department for the Blind, Veteran's Administration, Small Business Administration, Division of Persons with Disabilities, Workforce Development, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Drake University, and Iowa Medicaid. Persons from high school transition age to the aging population are also represented. Members of EDRN have presented to individual employers as well as employer organizations throughout the state. This group has been active in hosting Reverse Career Fairs for Iowans with disabilities to showcase and highlight their skills and talents to business partners. Placement from the job fairs held in Des Moines is at 26%. This is significant since participants in these fairs included persons with a long history of unemployment and more significant barriers to employment.

The innovation of reversing roles allowed IVRS job candidates to present their skills to business rather than a traditional interview. In 2017, IVRS staff in Waterloo held a reverse job fair for twelve Project Search students. These students prepared videos of themselves working in their

internships to show at the reverse job fair, as well as showcasing their talents through boards and demonstration. All 12 of these participants gained employment in their desired career fields prior to graduation!

As a part of the Reverse Career Fair, IVRS is also hosting summits to help educate business partners on the benefits of diversity in their workforce. In Iowa, with low unemployment rates, business and industry are considering populations that they traditionally did not pursue in hiring. These efforts are integrated into Future Ready Iowa strategies and are consistent with goals and objectives of that statewide effort. With the limited number of work-ready job candidates, the summit agenda was geared toward emphasizing the benefits to employers of hiring persons with disabilities. IVRS is striving to create business connections during this economic opportunity.

An exciting business partnership that grew over the last year was with Kwik Trip. Kwik Trip saw a need to carve out a position called “Retail Helper,” which assists the cashier by cleaning, packaging fruits and vegetables, stocking and rotating inventory. This allows the cashier to focus on the customer, providing optimal customer service, which increases business. This has proven to be a wise financial decision on the part of the business to create this opportunity for Retail Helper positions!

A process was implemented between IVRS and Kwik Trip to outline steps for IVRS counselors to refer potential job candidates for the Retail Helper position. The intent is to ensure that needs are met on the part of both the job candidate and potential employer. IVRS staff do a great job of making the match - in fact, so great that Iowa has the lowest position turnover rate at Kwik Trips stores. The Iowa turnover rate is at 22%, Minnesota 28%, and Wisconsin 40%. The Kwik Trip turnover rate for stores in general is 33%. This is one example of how IVRS is becoming a valued partner with businesses in Iowa and beyond. Kwik Trip staff at the regional level have conveyed that Iowa VR does the best job of pre-screening qualified candidates, as evidenced by the turnover data.

Sector Partnerships — IVRS area offices are involved and engaged in sector partnerships. At the state level, IVRS has representation on the statewide Career Pathways and Sector Partnership Advisory Boards and involved in policy development that addresses accessibility issues. At the local level, the sector partnerships are locally developed workforce partners that serve specific industry sectors by providing a talent pool of eligible job candidates, as well as technical assistance to business and industry regarding their specific questions and needs. The Burlington Area Office has one IVRS employee on each sector partnership which has proven to be a systemic approach to placement. This allows one team to serve the business, and when a member of the team resigns or retires, a new member from the organization is then placed on the partnership. In this manner, businesses receive services in a continuous fashion, the relationship is built with the partnership, and there is not any gap in service delivery to the business.

IVRS continues to support the Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) through Occupational Skills Training. REDI is a program through Walgreens that provides retail skills to externs or trainees with a variety of disabilities. The program works in partnership with agencies within a community to provide job coaches who can help externs gain skills and the opportunity for future employment. Participants in the REDI program are not guaranteed employment however; the purpose of the training is to provide externs the skills and competencies required to be successful in the retail environment. IVRS works in conjunction with Walgreens stores offering REDI, in addition to providing funding support to CRP partners who oversee job

coaching and training. Externs who successfully complete the 120-hour REDI training have the opportunity to apply for openings at Walgreens or with a neighboring business. Since the initiation of REDI in 2012, IVRS has worked with six Iowa providers (CRPs) to deliver REDI training in twelve Walgreens stores across Iowa.

IVRS began a partnership with Manpower in 2013 to assist Iowans with disabilities gain employment. IVRS job candidates gain exposure to positions that could turn into a permanent hire; they have access to jobs that are most plentiful in the current economy; and they are able to tap into Manpower's expertise in attracting and placing over 5 million people globally in a variety of positions through a proven intake process that identifies the best candidate match. By partnering with Manpower, IVRS candidates also receive 24/7 online training through Manpower Training Development Centers. Manpower and IVRS can assist the employer in providing the necessary accommodations and training required for the job candidate to be successful and meet the business's needs.

The IVRS Self-Employment Program (ISE) is a vocational option that may be considered as part of an individual's informed choice. A program for self-employment has been developed under an agreement between Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB). It is available to active candidates of IVRS or IDB who are able to become self-sufficient by establishing, expanding, or acquiring a small business. IVRS employs two full-time business staff who specialize in assisting job candidates with a vocational goal of self-employment.

Before investing time and money into a self-employment venture, the candidate must complete an in-depth study about the business they intend to start. The IVRS/IDB Counselors and the candidate, guided by the technical assistance of the IVRS Business Development Specialists, outline a plan of action to help explore: an individual's qualifications and skills; the entrepreneurial idea; determining the feasibility of the business idea; and facilitating Business Plan development should the idea demonstrate promise. Iowa Economic Development, Iowa Small Business Development Centers, Iowa Job Centers and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) are organizations that may help with preliminary exploration of business ventures. Services available through Iowa Workforce Development may also provide additional resources. IVRS and IDB provide the financial assistance to start a business to their respective job candidates with matching dollars provided by the job candidate. When the candidate is served by both agencies, IVRS and IDB coordinate the services and the plan.

IVRS has two videos featured through America's Job Honor Award that highlight business partnerships and individuals who have overcome barriers to achieve successful employment. These videos are excellent communication tools for business talking to business, and exemplify positive features of accessing VR employment services.

Additionally, IVRS boasts several members on the SRC who represent business and provide their perspective regularly IVRS.

IVRS efforts in coordinating with business partners helps foster competitive integrated employment. Customized employment strategies including Discovery and Customized employment continue to be refined within the IVRS system. Ongoing training has been made available to both staff and IVRS partners on providing these services, as well as services to businesses.

IVRS has prioritized business engagement to expand access to the trades industry and apprenticeships. The Iowa Workforce Center is a leader in the country with their emphasis on quality apprenticeship programs and IVRS collaborated with IWC during the past two years in training and outreach to apprenticeship programs attempting to identify opportunities to improve access for individuals with disabilities.

An initiative that grew in 2017 as part of this collaboration was beginning a partnership with the North Central States Regional Carpenter Council. Coordination occurred between the Nebraska VR offices, Iowa Job Corps, and Iowa VR. Key activities include:

- Identifying a point of contact for each area partner.
- Receiving consistent communication from the Council on openings and employment needs.
- The Council should refer applicants and apprentices to VR when applicable. Referral information shared.
- Improved communication and referral from Job Corps to VR in efforts to better connect graduated students to needed supports for on-going success.
- Improve marketing awareness of the trades with all partners. VR will share information at schools and transition fairs.
- VR should be contacted as soon as possible by the Council regarding any needs.
- Tour training centers will be set up with a direct contact list available for all partners.
- Meeting rooms can be used at the training center for any appointments - this will expand awareness for all partners utilizing the facilities.
- Continued follow-up meetings will occur at six months to review if we are improving career connections.
- VR will continue transition efforts with local high school districts and their presence at the Denison, IA Job Corps Program.
- A cheat sheet will be developed with key partner contact names and information.
- Expand the use of social media and marketing by partners of the collaborative service delivery options.

2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

IVRS utilizes all of our employment services for adults and youth. We have seen value in understanding the business needs and being able to integrate those needs into counseling and guidance that lays the foundation for employment planning and access to career pathways for students and youth with disabilities. Programs like the IVRS Transition Alliance Programs, Making the Grade, Project Search, Occupational Skill Training Programs, Pre-Employment Transition Work Readiness Programs, Access to school STEM programs, and the increase involvement of the Iowa Department of Education Intermediary Network focus on work-based learning opportunities for all students combine to enhance transition employment services for IVRS job candidates.

The IVRS Transition Resource Manager is actively involved with the Special Education Advisory Panel, and the Administrator works with the Department of Education's Work-Based Learning Grant as well as the Future Ready Iowa Program.

The IVRS Intermediary Network grant was implemented in late 2016 and renewable through contract amendments for five years. The purpose of this grant expanded efforts of the Intermediary Networks in areas without access to current IVRS-sponsored programs such as the Transition Alliance Program or Making the Grade.

The primary responsibilities under this grant include developing and leading initiatives and projects that create robust partnerships with regional K12 school districts, businesses, industries, organizations, and other community partnerships to enhance career-awareness, work-based learning opportunities, and early career connections and opportunities within the college's service area for students with disabilities. The goal of an Intermediary Network is to work with students with disabilities and align their career interests to appropriate post-secondary education as appropriate. The long-term results are positioning students for successful career attainment.

Data reported after the first year of this grant shows that the number of services provided by IN staff to students with disabilities totaled 2,388. The number of potentially eligible students served by an IVRS IN was 1,479. The current number of high schools involved is 113, with the potential to serve approximately 3,344 students with disabilities going forward.

h. Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

IVRS and the Iowa Department of Human Services developed a MOA outlining collaborative partnering efforts. The purpose of this agreement established a statewide system of coordinated, cost-efficient vocational/employment services for people with developmental disabilities with minimal overlap of responsibility and maximum utilization of resources between the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, hereinafter referred to as IVRS, and the Iowa Department of Human Services, hereinafter referred to as DHS. This agreement will serve to clarify roles and responsibilities of IVRS and DHS in regard to common consumers.

In accordance with section 101(a) (8) (B) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.53(d), this agreement includes the following provisions: 1. A description of the financial responsibility of the State Medicaid program to provide such services; 2. Information identifying the terms, conditions, and procedures under which mutual job candidates will be served by IVRS and DHS; 3. Information describing procedures for resolving interagency disputes under the agreement; and 4. Information describing the policies and procedures for each public entity to determine and identify the interagency coordination responsibilities for purposes of promoting the coordination and timely delivery of employment—related services.

This agreement is predicated on the belief that individuals with disabilities should be provided vocational options with priority placed upon creating opportunities for competitive employment in the community providing for integration and career growth. Services will be delivered based upon an individualized plan for a person according to his or her needs. Individual choice of service options will be honored to the extent possible through a coordinated service delivery system that makes the best use of existing and potential financial, human and community resources. Both IVRS and DHS are considered funders of the last resort by their respective

legislation. This MOA will assist in clarifying roles and responsibilities for reaching service/funding decisions.

IVRS and DHS agree to the following joint responsibilities in that: 1) Services authorized under this agreement must be provided by an approved vendor in a manner supportive of the philosophy governing both agencies, with an emphasis on informed choice and person—centered planning. Vendor approval prior to the delivery of services is required; however, separate certification or accreditation standards may be applied between IVRS and DHS. 2) Collaboration on the provision of joint staff training or cross training of staff is ongoing in order to ensure operational activities continue to meet the needs of the parties involved. 3) IVRS and DHS agree to obtain written consent from the client, provider and/or authorized representative for the release of information to any individual or entity not associated with the administration of the program. 4) A system is established that assures the following: (a) Plans shall address employment outcomes and specify services to be delivered and identify available options and responsible party. (b) A partnership is developed that combines resources and individual expertise to provide appropriate employment outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities. 5) Technical assistance and support is provided as a matter of routine or as requested to consumers, family members, advocates, case managers, VR counselors, service providers, IVRS/DHS administrative staff, other State agencies staff and the general public. 6) Supported Employment Services will ensure a smooth transition from the short term (IVRS/DHS funded) to the ongoing/extended (DHS funded) or natural supports, when applicable. 7) IVRS and DHS will provide services/resources to the extent of available funding. 8) IVRS and DHS shall cooperate and collaborate in all respects in the performance of this agreement including, but not limited to, sharing individual and service provider information. To the extent that any of such information is confidential pursuant to any federal or state statute or regulation, the party receiving that information shall ensure its continued confidentiality and use of such information only for the purposes set forth in this agreement.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Responsibilities

1) The IVRS Counselor will direct services for individuals at a local level by:

- a) Processing the application upon receipt of the referral to determine if the person qualifies and meets the criteria for requested IVRS services within 60 days of application;
- b) Developing Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in accordance with IVRS guidelines after eligibility is determined;
- c) Serving as a primary information resource for the individual with a disability, his/her family, the case manager/community based care manager, and other members of the team working with the person regarding IVRS programs and services (i.e.: provide assessment or benefit planning information, etc.);
- d) Providing vocational guidance and counseling for individuals with disabilities and their families;
- e) Providing expertise to the team in defining goals, objectives and support services needed to attain appropriate employment;
- f) Contributing to the development of the Individual Service Plan (ISP);

- g) Participating in team meetings that involve a mutual client or impact vocational services;
 - h) Assisting in monitoring individual progress on reaching Employment Outcomes;
 - i) Arranging and/or purchasing services; referring to other services, as needed and as identified in the Individual Plan of Employment;
 - j) Assuring quality of vocational services provided;
 - k) Providing ongoing communication with all members of an individual's team as needed;
 - l) Cooperating with case manager/community based care manager in monitoring quality of employment service, reviewing both individual and provider progress;
 - m) Encouraging individuals who enter Supported Employment Services and receive Social Security benefits to become aware of and utilize SSA work incentives;
 - n) Identifying ongoing supports to begin by the time of an individual's stabilization on the job.
- 2) Personnel assigned by IVRS will provide tracking and monitoring required for contract expenditures completed by IVRS.
 - 3) For eligible individuals, IVRS may purchase adaptive equipment, rehabilitation engineering and worksite modifications for community employment purposes only, consistent with the Individual Employment Plan.
 - 4) Provide referral and funding as required for supported employment services not covered by Waiver such as Employer Development. IVRS will implement appropriate supported employment funding for transition students until age 24. IVRS will be the funder of first resort for transition-aged youth under the age of 24 who require Supported Employment Services (SES). If a vocational outcome is not achieved by the time a job candidate turns 24, or SES is no longer an employment goal, any remaining authorizations will be cancelled by IVRS in order for DHS funds to be utilized. Any student between their 18th and 24th birthday who achieves stabilized employment will receive long term support from the waiver. IVRS funding includes vocational services for eligible VR job candidates transitioning from secondary-school programs focused on competitive, community-based integrated employment. Services will be coordinated with IME for a smooth transition of necessary services.
 - 5) An eligible client of IVRS waiting for services from the Waiver can be served by IVRS. Service for SES is authorized by IVRS until Waiver funds become available. At that time, IVRS would cancel any unused authorization(s) for remaining supported employment (d-code) services in order for Waiver funds to be used.

Both IVRS and DHS must adhere to their own policies and procedures for selecting vendors and authorizing funding. When IVRS determines that an employment outcome has been achieved, the DHS will assume responsibility for employment related support services as indicated in their individualized plan.

Department of Human Services Responsibilities

- 1) The DHS will convey to the Medicaid managed care organization providing case management that it should coordinate services for individuals at the local level by:

- a) Referring the individual (with guardian if involved) to IVRS if pursuing supported competitive employment. It is the individual and/or guardian's responsibility to contact the counselor and make application for services. The case manager/community based care manager will provide the most recent ISP with psychological, medical and all diagnostic reports from DHS files upon request of the counselor with a signed release from the individual.
 - b) Convening and chairing team meetings, providing reasonable notice of meetings in advance to the IVRS counselor;
 - c) Working with the IVRS counselor, individual, family or guardian in selecting a vocational/employment service provider;
 - d) Sending updated copies of the ISP and related materials to IVRS counselor and vocational services provider;
 - e) Including the Employment Services Outcomes and action steps in the ISP, and document how the required extended support services will be delivered;
 - f) Including IVRS counselor and provider reports in employment reports;
 - g) Cooperating with IVRS counselor in monitoring of the quality of employment service, reviewing both individual and provider progress;
 - h) Providing copies of the plans of care to IVRS counselor and provider when submitted for approval (as needed).
- 2) Funds will be provided for job development, job coaching and ongoing support to DHS-eligible individuals for supported employment services. For those eligible individuals of both programs, coordinated efforts will continue, including negotiating a cost sharing arrangement that would include IVRS funds for Employment Development and recognizing IVRS intent to provide funding supports for those individuals 24 years of age and younger. During the transition period, both DHS and IVRS will make efforts to coordinate the service and funding arrangements with input from the consumer and case managers/community based care managers.
- 3) Contracts will be monitored through the DHS HCBS Quality Assurance.

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

In the event that IVRS and DHS are unable to achieve an acceptable cost-sharing arrangement, the following will apply:

- 1) Attempts will be made to resolve the issue at the lowest level of disagreement. When a responsibility for payment issue cannot be resolved at the lowest level it should be referred to the next highest level.
- 2) If the IVRS counselor and the DHS team member are unable to achieve an acceptable cost-sharing arrangement, administrative representatives from both agencies will discuss and bring resolution in the form of a cost-sharing arrangement to the matter.
- 3) This MOA recognizes that each agency has its own administrative mechanisms for the timely resolution of internal disputes. This MOA recognizes these procedures and permits each agency to resolve its own internal disputes.

The agencies will abide by Iowa Code 679A.19

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

The IVRS attorney is currently on the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council, and their Executive Director is assigned to the leadership team of Employment First, which is coordinated through IVRS. Both groups share a focus and belief that all individuals can be employed with the right services and supports, and that through progressive employment options, there is something for everyone.

3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

IVRS and the Department of Human Services (DHS) that administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa have entered into a Memorandum of Agreement. This MOA describes the financial responsibilities and the populations served to maximize resources and avoid duplication. Collaborative planning efforts occurred with DHS in the implementation of the Iowa Employment First principles that complement the vision of IVRS that “Employment is the first priority and preferred outcome of publically funded services for people with disabilities.”

IVRS is also represented on the Mental Health Planning Council and meets quarterly with this group to discuss service needs and gaps in Iowa, and review legislative initiatives.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

IVRS maintains a web-based case management system with resulting monthly, quarterly, and annual reports providing job candidate caseload data, which along with budget information, is used to predict resources available for service delivery. An internal budget team meets monthly and the financial team has developed a sustainability model that is used as a foundation for the allocation of agency financial resources. Discussions occur regarding filling vacancies, justifying hiring decisions, waiting list removal decisions, and setting case expenditure guidelines.

The Iowa Department of Administrative Services and the Iowa Department of Management reviews every hiring decision and requires justification to hire. Personnel in the Disability Determination Services Bureau are not reported as they are not covered by the IVRS State Plan.

In recent years developed a change in workforce planning which included Rehabilitation Assistants and Rehabilitation Associates to provide caseload management support, freeing master's level counselors to focus on their core functions of eligibility decision-making, plan development, counseling and guidance, and job placement. Positions are targeted to offices based on optimum caseload size, as well as job candidates projected to come off the waiting list and move into active services.

Area Office Supervisors and other managers have 17 total positions (down from 20). Professional staff — counselors and rehabilitation associates have 113 current positions and support staff, including rehabilitation assistants, currently have 58 positions.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

There are no current vacancies with our Area Office Supervisors and manager levels. Our professional staff, Counselors and Rehabilitation Associates, currently have 5 vacancies. Our support staff, including Rehabilitation Assistants have 6 current vacancies.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Area Office Supervisors and Managers are projected to have 4 vacancies during the next five years. Professional Staff including Rehabilitation Counselors and Associates, are projected to have 35 vacancies during the next five years. Support staff including Rehabilitation Assistants, are projected to have 20 vacancies. This is based upon retirement factors and an aging workforce and does not consider other types of turnover that may be experienced.

B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

In the State of Iowa, there are two institutions that provide a post-secondary graduate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling: Drake University, Des Moines; and the University of Iowa, Iowa

City, Iowa. Both programs offer a degree that allows graduates to work in rehabilitation counseling.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The University of Iowa has twenty-one students enrolled in the Master Degree Rehabilitation Counseling program. Drake University has students enrolled in their Master Degree Counseling Program.

Specific outreach efforts have occurred during the past year with both the University of Iowa and Drake University. The University of Iowa had actually moved away from the Rehabilitation Counseling program focus and now will re-engage because of our discussions. Drake has had a primary emphasis on growing their mental health counseling program and we are looking for strategies to promote the vocational rehabilitation connections. Our training officer has developed a specific internship program which will provides outreach efforts for the student population.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The University of Iowa had ten student graduates during the prior year and Drake University had student graduates.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
See previous section.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Area Office Supervisors and Managers are projected to have 14 vacancies during the next five years. Professional Staff including Rehabilitation Counselors and Associates are projected to have 47 vacancies during the next five years and our Support Staff including Rehabilitation Assistants are projected to have 29 vacancies.

B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

In the State of Iowa there are two institutions of higher education that provide a post-secondary graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling: Drake University, Des Moines; and the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. Both programs offer a degree that allows graduates to work not only in rehabilitation counseling but also mental health counseling. In the past IVRS found that it was

difficult to recruit students into IVRS because of their strong interest in mental health counseling.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The University of Iowa has 21 students enrolled in the Master Degree Rehabilitation Counseling program. Drake University has 33 students enrolled in their Master Degree Counseling Program.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The University of Iowa has 10 student graduates during the prior year and Drake University had 5 student graduates.

2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The agency actively works with the two Rehabilitation Counseling programs in Iowa and recruits from graduate programs in Minnesota, Illinois, and Wisconsin. During the past year, IVRS area offices supervised practicum and intern students in the Rehabilitation Counseling programs to provide them with fieldwork exposure to the state rehabilitation agency. In an attempt to address the recruitment of individuals from minority backgrounds into the field of rehabilitation, IVRS reviewed its recruiting and hiring practices to assure consideration of applicants from diverse backgrounds. IVRS actively attempts to recruit from a wide variety of sources including the Iowa State hiring system, Iowa Workforce Development and various community newspapers.

Communication with staff continues on the importance of working with our diverse client basis from a service delivery perspective, but also from a staff-recruiting basis. The screening process is equitable to all applicants. Screening is done strictly on a numeric basis and the top scoring applicants are interviewed.

Specific consultation has occurred with Iowa's Department of Administrative Services in efforts to expand recruitment from non-traditional sources. Although the State of Iowa has underutilized departments for Females, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities, IVRS has met or exceeded all state goals. With the addition of the Rehabilitation Associate and Rehabilitation Assistant classifications, the options for applicants from diverse populations have also increased.

3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

IVRS established personnel standards that are consistent according to state guidelines and are reviewed by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services. The academic degree standard for VR counselors remains a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling and guidance, or a closely related major emphasis. We have submitted paperwork to the state administrative services bureau asking for review of what a closely related field could be and we are hoping for expanded flexibility. At this time, they do not consider a MBA or MPA and because of our close linkages to business practices, we are hoping to extend to those fields.

B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

State personnel standards for supervisors and resource managers in the Rehabilitation Services Bureau are similar. Rehabilitation Associates provide case-management assistance increasing the counselors' capacities to perform in their core functioning areas. The education, experience, and special requirements for Rehabilitation Associate classification include graduation from an accredited college or university with major coursework in a human services related area; or an equivalent combination of education and experience substituting full—time human service work experience for the required education (thirty semester or equivalent hours equals one year) to a maximum substitution of two years.

For certain positions, the job description determines the skills needed to do the job. In the review of applicants, the agency looks not only at academic degrees held, but the individual's ability to perform the job duties of a specific opening. Some candidates with prior experience in community rehabilitation programs, school systems, or personnel organizations have the desired skills and contacts to place individuals with disabilities into employment. In many rural areas, qualified candidates with a master's degree is quite limited. In those cases, individuals with related degrees are considered for vacancies.

As positions become vacant, the IVRS supervisor determines if some of the case management duties can be performed by a Rehabilitation Associate; freeing up time for the Rehabilitation Counselor to provide counseling and employer development services, as well as approving all eligibility determinations and employment plans.

IVRS has a strategic plan emphasizing business involvement with collaborative and unified efforts at integrating a continuum of services with our State Core Partners. This is a key part of the WIOA Unified Plan efforts. These strategies help enhance IVRS' ability to have personnel understanding the 21st century employment needs.

4. Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. System of staff development

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

IVRS provides and supports ongoing, professional career development training; which may be provided either internal or external to the agency.

IVRS is certified through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification to provide approved continuing education hours for applicable coursework. Training activities focus on knowledge or understanding of rehabilitation topics; customer service, development and demonstration of new levels of skills; and organizational change projects that enhance the achievement of employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

IVRS staff have the opportunity to participate in workshops and seminars and concentrated training activities to improve skills in working with specific groups of individuals with disabilities, as well as individual or group staff development activities designed to enable staff to acquire special skills.

IVRS anticipated that considerable training was needed for staff to fully implement the key components of WIOA. As the result, a variety of direct trainings were provided to acquaint both staff and IVRS partners about Section 511 requirements under WIOA, the provision of Pre-ETS, how to serve potentially eligible, work within schools and develop ongoing relationships with businesses. IVRS hired a Training Specialist in January 2017 to help keep staff trainings current, consistent and compliant. A variety of Continuing Education credits have been made available to IVRS staff to participate in trainings offered by IVRS. These include training such as Benefits Planning Services, Business Placement training and Employment Services.

There are ongoing opportunities for staff to indicate training needs. One section of the annual performance evaluation of all staff relates to training needs that have been identified for that individual. Staff also request agency support to attend conferences and workshops pertaining to areas of development that are identified in annual evaluation conferences.

Current support was provided to staff expressing interest in attending the “One Door, Many Paths” conference: co-sponsored by IVRS and Workforce Development; the Association of Persons Supporting Employment First annual conference; the Iowa Rehabilitation Association Annual Conference; ABLE Act training; Future Ready Iowa Summit, STEM Conference and ongoing Community of Practice webinars.

The RSB Bureau has undertaken an innovative change to further influence professional development in future years through organizing staff structure in the assignment of Resource Managers to regional area offices. This provides a central point of contact to support the area office supervisor in the delivery of information, training and quality assurance initiatives.

Formal staff development sessions also support implementation of goals and priorities in the State Plan with respect to Cultural Diversity, coordination with Workforce partners, services to Deaf and hard of hearing job candidates, retention of job candidates to successful rehabilitation, changes in the Supported Employment Services, and services to high school students and youth.

The training coordinator position is offering professional development courses to all employees. Specific classes are provided to employees after they complete their six-month probationary periods and vary depending upon the job classification involved.

The following courses are planned to be offered through the professional development series provided by the State of Iowa:

Supervisors:

From Interview to Hire

Fundamentals of Supervision

Performance Evaluation

Americans with Disabilities Act

Crucial Conversations

Discipline, Grievances, & the Merit System

Diversity Training for Managers and Supervisors

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Anti-Discrimination

Investigating Employee Misconduct

Preventing Sexual Harassment for Supervisors

Shaping Effective & Engaged Teams

Strategic Planning & Systems Thinking

New Counselors:

Diversity Training for Employees

Ethical Issues in Today's Workplace

Preventing Sexual Harassment for Employees (E-learning)

Professional Impact

Customer Service

Managing Your Time and Priorities

Americans with Disabilities Act (E-learning)

Other rehabilitation staff:

Diversity Training for Employees

Ethical Issues in Today's Workplace

Preventing Sexual Harassment for Employees (E-learning)

Professional Impact

Customer Service

Managing Your Time and Priorities

Listening: The Forgotten Skill

B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

IVRS has a training coordinator position who stays current on research trends through frequent communication with our university training programs. Management staff are aware and utilize the national Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials and we have shared practices through internal work groups as applicable. (Motivational interviewing being an example of a topic) IVRS administrator and senior management staff will often participate in national conferences such as the spring and fall CSAVR Conferences where promising practices and research based ideas are shared. IVRS also participates in regional training and sharing with our common states of Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska which also includes general and blind agencies. These opportunities also facilitate the acquisition and sharing of researched based practices. We also have outreached for TA to WINTAC in areas such as Career Index, Performance measures, quality review of SES programs and services and workforce collaboration which also has been a strategy to stay abreast of current knowledge trends.

The agency routinely uses the latest research and pilot projects to update training programs in areas such as assistive technology, mental illness, learning disabilities, autism, and head injury/traumatic brain injury. IVRS is the lead agency with the Employment First Initiative and both internal staff and IVRS partners have access to a myriad of customized employment training webinars.

IVRS also provides training on policy, motivational interviewing, benefits planning, and when new initiatives and issues arise, training is developed, coordinated and/or provided by the IVRS Training Specialist. Recent examples this past year have included external training coordination with the Epilepsy Foundation and the Iowa Brain Injury Alliance.

Standing committees exist to help disseminate information on a regular basis in the areas of Motivational Interviewing, business development and engagement, benefits planning and assistive technology. These committees help to keep field staff informed of best practices and preferred methods for service delivery.

A priority over the past year has been training in the area of pre-employment transition services and financial literacy. Our training coordinator developed curriculum, which was demonstrated on-site in every office across the state.

In 2016, a Request for Proposal was submitted through the state contracting process for a training provider to provide benefits planning training to 36 VR staff to expand the VR capacity for this service. This expanded current IVRS efforts to ensure Benefits Planning services remain available to every Social Security beneficiary who utilizes IVRS for employment services.

5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

IVRS contracts with interpreters to provide manual communication for individuals who are deaf when that is the preferred mode of communication. IVRS staff also contract with language interpreters when an individual speaks a language other than English. This may be done through a state agency, through a private agency, as well as the use of CTS Language Link, which is part of the State's Master Agreement.

Collaboration continues with the Iowa School for the Deaf on suggestions to improve service delivery for this population. IVRS maintains an agreement with the Iowa Department for the Blind to convert training materials into large print or Braille format for trainees with visual impairments and learning disabilities. All training materials are provided in the preferred means of communication, including Braille, large print, disk, or closed caption. IVRS, through the work of our SRC representative and Iowa Client Assistance Program, has made available an orientation video for outreach purposes which is completed in American Sign Language.

In addition to IVRS using <https://translate.google.com/>, staff also use forms that have been translated into Spanish. These forms include an applicant's Rights and Responsibilities, as well as a brochure in Spanish that explains IVRS services.

6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

IVRS and the Department of Education have an agreement to provide joint training for staff to receive common information and skill development pertinent to students with disabilities. This includes the DE-sponsored Summer Institute, as well as local IVRS staff/management and education agencies conversations on how to work together to support students in transition. In these discussions, planning occurs on how to develop the core competencies of staff, how to expand on staff capacities, and what actions will achieve student outcomes. Often this requires participation locally in training and cross training of staff on language, services, etc.

IVRS has a close working relationship with the bureau responsible for Special Education within the Iowa Department of Education. IVRS counselors participate in IEP meetings and provide information and referral services to high schools for students that are on waiting lists that are not

being served. Pre-Employment Transition Services are made available to potentially eligible students as well as to those students in eligible status. IVRS and school districts are participating in initiatives to provide summer services to students with disabilities. In these initiatives, joint training is provided to IVRS staff and school personnel so that resources of each entity can be appropriately utilized for improved student outcomes.

The 2015/2016 student count from the Department of Education identified 21,913 students receiving special education services or being served under a 504 plan. For the FFY18 school year, IVRS received the Department of Education numbers in December 2017, which reflect a slight change in overall numbers of students with disabilities to be 22,047. The following table demonstrates the student count used for FFY17 as reported on 10/30/16:

Grade Level	IEP	504
9 th Grade	4,656	942
10 th Grade	4,644	973
11 th Grade	4,182	953
12 th Grade	4,591	972
9-12 Total	18,073	3,840

The following two tables reflect the number of students identified by IVRS who were reported at receiving services at the field level as well as those also receiving services through our case management reporting system.

FFY	Potentially Eligible	Transition Students in Caseload	Total Transition Students Served
2017	5,624	5,618	11,242
2016	3,484	3,701	7,185
2015	4227	4227	
2014	4288	4288	

FFY18 Student Count as Reported by the Department of Education 12/22/17:

Grade Level	IEP	504	Total Student Body
9 th Grade	4634	1032	37809
10 th Grade	4415	1104	37241
11 th Grade	4013	1155	36566
12 th Grade	4540	1154	37384
Total	17602	4445	149000

During FFY16 school year, IVRS served 7,185 students, which was 33% of the total number of students in SPED and under a 504.

In considering the FFY18 student body in special education or under a 504, and the number of students that IVRS served in FFY17 (11,242), IVRS actually served 51% of the students who were potentially eligible or eligible to receive services in the State of Iowa. This is a significant increase from FFY16 to FFY17.

The IVRS model of serving students which includes substantial work readiness and work orientation to students who are potentially eligible, intensive services to students who are eligible, and expanding contract initiatives to meet capacity needs, all combine to increase the number of students served in the State of Iowa.

j. Statewide Assessment

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

Individuals with most significant disabilities, and their need for supported employment; are continually reviewed through our Resource Manager team positions which have roles and responsibilities in collaborative partnering with local area offices and service providers in addressing the needs of individuals requiring supported employment programming. This continues to be addressed as a required state plan goal. A CSNA was completed in November of 2015 and this was recently updated in the fall of 2017. Another CSNA will be completed in the fall of 2019 to prepare for the 2020-2023 State Plan. Since November 2015, Iowa has explored changes in relationship to service delivery for the provision of Supported Employment. IVRS has also experienced significant changes to the way services may be contracted with CRPs. This has required a series of trainings, both by video and in-person at local levels communicating the expectations for the delivery of the supported employment service as well as financial and program quality indicators. IVRS has participated with a federal Employment First Grant receiving technical assistance in provider transformation efforts as well as customized

employment training for staff and partners. Through active participation with the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment, we are able to listen to families, service recipients and other stakeholders regarding observed needs and gaps in service. This is actually one of the roles also played by our State Rehabilitation Council Outreach committee. They are engaged in this process and help identify through the ICIE feedback, priority service delivery issues to better meet the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities in the area of SES. These efforts led to discussions and partnering with the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise System and the Department of Human Services to coordinate the service delivery in a better way. Current efforts are continuing to expand the communication, awareness and understanding of our local education agencies in their role for this population. The SRC has also provided direction and guidance regarding expectations for outreach to the Section 511 population which is integrated into service delivery efforts and SES programming. IVRS recognizes the need for continued communication to occur with CRP staff. Significant inroads have been made between IVRS and CRP partners. Of further note is the fact that a representative from a CRP was appointed by the Governor to the SRC. The following information pertains to other assessment strategies that IVRS has undertaken to help in service delivery and to ensure job candidates are receiving the employment services and the supported employment services necessary to attain and retain employment. IVRS and State Rehabilitation Council members routinely review practices, customer satisfaction, IVRS policies, quality assurance and agency data, and labor market information. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has also been an ongoing topic at SRC meetings, particularly with regard to collaboration among state agencies and outreach to stakeholders and other partners. All of this information contributes to identifying specific needs and gaps for IVRS to address as part of the state planning process. The SRC's Outreach subcommittee solicited services from the Iowa Coalition of Integration and Employment (ICIE) to develop a survey for Iowa stakeholders to assess satisfaction with IVRS. A 14-question survey was developed and sent to the following individuals or groups in Iowa: Individuals with a Disability, Parent/Family Member/Guardian, Community Rehabilitation Service Providers, Educator/AEA Personnel, Case Manager/Care Coordinator, Service Coordinator, WIOA Title I Representative, Adult Education & Literacy Act Program Representative, Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program Representative, and "Other." The intent of the survey was to determine satisfaction with services from IVRS, areas of concern, identify Best Practices within systems, and recommend suggestions on how to improve services. SRC survey results were discussed in SRC committee meetings and shared in October of 2017 with IVRS supervisors and SRC Chair (Jill Crosser). Results from the survey's 342 responses were shared by IVRS Administration and ICIE representatives with the full Council. Responses were addressed at the February 2018 SRC meeting attended by IVRS supervisors. SRC members and supervisory staff shared their perspectives in response to the survey related to: positives, what's not working, and strategies to address and concerns. The survey had numerous comments about things that IVRS is doing well, but also identified areas of concern and needing improvement. Positive patterns identified included: Flexibility of staff, the clear and concise collaboration between partners Supporting students when they leave the school Funding for services to achieve results Communication Expertise of IVRS is invaluable Promptness and creativity of finding work options Services provided to students Caring staff with the best intentions Partnership in new adventures, attendance at IEPs, etc. Specific Staff and Supervisors, Resource Managers and Administrator mentioned Menu of Services and the funding changes Easy to partner, their desire to assist job candidates and patience in understanding others may

need to move a bit slower due to staff and capacity Co-location A great resource, excellent counselors, empower job candidates Strong belief in the mission of IVRS Assistance with completion of the forms Ability to support a formal post-secondary education Assist the One-Stop on difficult job candidates Assistance with work-related supplies and needs Improvements fell into four key areas for systems-change: 1. Training and Education 2. Tools (i.e. forms, etc.) 3. Consistent Implementation (i.e. processes and procedures) 4. Leadership (i.e. communication, etc.) IVRS supervisors shared actions being taken during a recent SRC meeting in response to reviewing the survey results. This correlates with the CSAVR Vision 2020 that promotes a dual customer focus, a look at innovative practices, and assurance that IVRS is partner-driven. IVRS administration responded to the ICIE survey with a renewed focus on results, messaging, connecting to partners, and changing the way IVRS assesses quality assurance. Strategies to raise the level of communication based on survey results are being explored in each IVRS office; along with consistency in service provision, and expectations for collaboration. The 14-questions survey was broken down by question to address internally, along with ongoing assistance from Iowa's SRC. Below is a synopsis of survey results: 1. General: perspectives: Largest group responding was case managers, care coordinators, service coordinators: 28.7% out of over 300 WIOA Title I-16.7% Community rehab service providers 15.5% Wagner-Peyser 15.25% Educators/AEA 8.5% Other: 8.21% Clients were 4.1% Parents/families: 2.35% AEL: 0.59% (2) 2. Professional partners: How many referrals have you made to IVRS in the last two years? None: 11.25% or 36 1 referral: 5. 3% 2-5: 28.44% 6-10: 21.25% (68) Over 10: 33.75% (108) 62% satisfied; 26.77% not satisfied Extremes Noted from positive to negative with common themes: ? Communication and follow up ? Consistency issues: staff and supervisors (supervisors approve services? Staff have their own process and requirements? Etc.) ? Staff following process, etc.? Duplicative forms ? Understanding VR process - trust issues ? Some issues identified were toward other partners - how do we handle this? 3. Overall, rate referral process experience: Frustrating/confusing: 10.59% (36) Somewhat difficult: 16.2% (55) Fine: 46.47% (158) Great! 15.59% (53) NA 11.2% or (38) 4. Suggestions for improvement of referral process: Review and communication, hire more, on-line, smaller caseloads, paperwork is intimidating to parents/students; more communication came up a lot; lots of "none to note", need training on referral process; flow chart on process for partners; too many changes makes for confusion; "easy document handout for clients; confusion over changes, and suggest consistency. Shorten wait time between referral and access to services; Consistent method of referral as different offices demand different things; Most seem fairly positive, but overall they feel we are understaffed, communication could be improved, and consistency of process and simplicity. 5. Rate experience with VR application process: a. Frustrating/confusing: 8.33% (28) b. Somewhat difficult 12.8% (43) c. Fine: 38.69% (130) d. Great! 9.52% (32) e. NA 30.65% (103) 48.21% "fine to it was great" 21.13% "somewhat difficult to frustrating" Issues: ? Paperwork by PWD ? Time lag to eligibility and planning ? Consistency between offices ? Education on services, processes, etc.? Follow through by VR ? Confusing Forms, etc.? More thorough intake needed 6. Share suggestions to improve the application process: Many NA; should help JCs and families complete; more user friendly form needed; CRPs want to be paid for application or VR helps; train all Center staff (cross training); retrain counselors to follow standard procedure; psych eval. on file?; Decorah office is good, but overwhelmed with high caseload (just hired) By far, most responses are na or none. 7. Rate how collaborative you find VR as a partner and service: 1. Not collaborative 5.34% or 18 2. Somewhat: 26.4% (89) 3. Average: 19.29%; 65 4. Very collaborative 29.67% or 100 5. Exceptional partner: 16.02% 54 6. NA 3.26% or 11 8. Share

suggestions to improve collaboration by VR: personnel change a lot is common; lots of new staff; consistent personnel; communication and consistency between counselors; silos need to come down. One supervisor per region. Fewer cases per counselor and speedier process. Communications is often cited. Keep website updated. Communication Failing to follow through on what we agreed to do Timeliness Varying skill levels of IVRS staff Consistency in delivery and authorization Don't offer much beyond funding (skills issue?) IVRS needs to pay for staff to participate in Fairs, etc. Significant changes impact State Leadership - What is the message you are getting from DM? Local level meetings with IWD Education on services IVRS forces Pre-ETS on schools and they have other goals schools need to do Contracted vendors not producing WIOA "a fad that will go away" Slow funding approval process Parents work and cannot meet between 8 and 4:30 Unprepared staff; unorganized; unfamiliar with the cases Communication and follow through How can teachers help? Hire more staff More accountability of the staff (supervisor spot checking) Set days to check-in with teachers Need cell phones for texting, etc. Regular rotation in meeting with the teachers and students Need to assign and communicate assignments as it is difficult to know with the changes in staff Train and "hang out" business lunches, etc. Participate in One-Stop office meetings. Review paperwork before intake and meetings so prepared for the meeting Follow the IWD dress code Consistency in funding, dress, communication, follow-up, procedures, etc. Update hand outs and give IVRS a name change More interaction between partners The silos need to come down Align IVRS and IWD regions Educate partners when the law changes Hold partner intakes Located in the One-Stops Meeting regularly with leadership to update, etc. Assist the families in need instead of relying on other family members to do it. Common intake, database, etc., Teach them to think more outside the box Ethics of conversation and doing things for the good of the client Individual Placement Support Streamline funding code, reduce codes in Menu, provide incentives and outcome payments along with the fee for service Establish clear expectations for timelines and stick to it 9. Rate overall satisfaction with quality of VR services: a. Not satisfied 9.88% or 33 b. Somewhat 19.16% 64 c. Satisfied 26.35% 88 d. Very satisfied 26.05% 87 e. NA 8.68% or 29 71.56% satisfied with service delivery; 9.88% dissatisfied Issues: Consistency of staff knowledge and skills Leadership partnership of WIOA needs improvement Supporting job candidates during the "in-between" stages Job coach supports not providing the "good example" Timeliness of authorizations, approvals for authorizations, provider not compensated, etc. IVRS staff understanding of procedures and when can or cannot do something Concrete services and information concerning Pre-ETS Communication with Partners Redundant forms 10. Share suggestions to improve VR services: Follow through and communicate, more consistency, feedback to see if served; shorter waiting list; turnover—training; lots of NA or "none." Billing process on-line (CRP—get rid of redundancy; way more paperwork needed than Medicaid; frequent changes, client payment takes long to process, financial process is slow. 11. Throughout referral, application and services process, did you get support/assistance expected? a. Yes 48.48% 160 b. No 13.94% 46 c. NA 26.67% 88 d. Describe problems 10.91% or 36 Don't hear back after make referrals; authorizations in a timely manner, and needing to re-request, mistakes on authorizations. Lack of communication in communications; expected more collaboration; depends on counselors and locations—some offices helpful, and some not. 12. Suggestions to make VR more responsive to needs Many are NA or "none"; constant and reliable communication; smaller caseloads to improve services; come to weekly meetings; schools are not aware of where students are, and no connections to parents. Many negative comments reflect of specific counselors, and other experiences are better. Too heavy caseloads. Answer phone and

respond to e-mails more timely. Lots feel we need smaller caseloads to do a better job. 13. Share what you appreciate most about VR services “bad reputation for years, and I appreciate they want to change”; friendly staff and program for my students; friendly staff; great communication between VR and IWD; valuable partner—easy to work with; good counselors are supportive. Friendly and genuine; friendly, great partners; dedicated; always there; and it goes on. Many feel we are good; overworked. 1. Provide additional feedback: Continue within schools; thank you; make vets a priority; many are NA; some great examples of collaborative work, and this should be more often. Lucky to have VR in our area; co-location is not integration, so we all need to do a better job of partnering; IVRS staff are using survey information to develop subsequent strategies to fold into IVRS Strategic Plan discussions. IVRS supervisors led staff discussions to address critical elements of high achieving organizations in the areas of Visionary Leadership, Customer Focus, Valuing Employees and partners, Managing for Innovation, Management by Facts and Focus on results and creating value. These efforts will continue with the development of a new strategic plan for 2019-2022. This also led to local discussions focused on mission moments where exemplary efforts to move these characteristics forward were discussed and shared. Referrals and outcomes for individuals receiving supported employment services continue to increase and expand. This has been driven by Employment First efforts occurring across state systems as well as increased collaboration and partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers, Iowa Medicaid, and Iowa’s Workforce system Communication has occurred in all 13 IVRS offices regarding the Employment First philosophy and IVRS’ service delivery structure and strategies for Supported Employment Services (SES). The structure IVRS uses to provide proper service delivery and identify expectations, responsibilities, documentation requirements and payment schedules for SES and other employment services is outlined in all service contracts and posted the IVRS Internet. Each area office is provided training on contracting for Supported Employment Services annually. Training tools are also made available to staff that include: recorded webinars; resource documents; cheat sheets; how-to guides; service delivery manuals; sample reports; in addition to onsite meetings available to internal staff and external partners of IVRS who provide SES. In January of 2017, a training specialist position was hired internally to better address internal and external training needs of not only the agency, but IVRS partner programs. Specific focus has been on orientation and training of new staff, expanded on-boarding strategies, better linkages to our degree training programs, expanded internship opportunities, expanded training and awareness in financial literacy, motivation interviewing, Pre-Employment Transition Services, business services and the use of technology for improved work effectiveness. Since November of 2015, IVRS updated our Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation policy to encourage staff to support employment goals that enhance the individual’s skill development and supports the State of Iowa’s business community by encouraging individuals to secure employment in Fast Track career jobs or STEM careers. Through the expansion of services that connect with business and industry, IVRS creates fundamental linkages with the business community in a manner that strengthens informed choice and develops the labor pool needed by Iowa’s business community. An IVRS Business Specialist is assigned to provide training services to staff regarding making linkages with businesses; as well as providing services to businesses and community providers as well. Other strategies to refine service delivery include: • Policy review and implementation has been changed to include the integration of the Coordination Council, which is an internal review and consultation team working alongside the efforts of the VR Service Delivery Team of the SRC Committee. • Templates for SES employment services and scenario/examples have been developed and

enhanced through input from community providers. • Local School Plans have been established by field staff in each of the high school districts in Iowa. • Memorandum of Agreements have been signed between IVRS and the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Department of Human Services to outline service responsibilities for SES. • Partnership Plus agreements have been expanded with an emphasis and moderate growth in Ticket to Work handoffs occurring at the time of VR closure. IVRS has a staff person assigned to helping provide overview and training to Benefit Planning staff. • Individual Plans for Employment were revised to include Pre-Employment Transition Services along with a projected post-school outcome goal for high school students. • IVRS developed policies to ensure that students and youth with disabilities are provided those services mandated by WIOA, which include Pre-Employment Training Services. • Project SEARCH and other programs such as TAP, Making the Grade, and Intermediary Network contracts continue to increase numbers served and expand capacity for IVRS. • IVRS expanded communication efforts through a partnership with the Iowa Coalition of Integration and Employment to ensure that individuals currently employed at subminimum wages in Iowa receive information about competitive integrated employment and the required career counseling and information and referrals services at regular intervals for as long as they earn subminimum wages. • The IVRS website is being revised to improve accessibility and move towards an electronic case processing system. IVRS increased communication to Community Rehabilitation Program partners during this period, as well as added services that currently include “Discovery” and “Customized Employment.” There has been an increase in Occupational Skills Training programs developed to help serve individuals who are Most Significantly Disabled. Onsite/hands-on training is available from a variety of service sectors, all of which strengthen options for people with disabilities. IVRS finds challenges in trying to figure out strategies for a youth/student population who have little in the way of community work experiences. Continued efforts include discussions with the Department of Education to improve communication and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local school districts. Efforts are being made to improve communication and access to families and parents through expanded partnerships with the Parent and Family training centers and the University of Iowa’s Center for Disabilities and Development. Communication also occurs through IVRS’ active presence of statewide groups like the Developmental Disabilities Council and the State Mental Health Council. IVRS is seeing an increase in service to individuals with the most significant disabilities, which is consistent with our mission. The Managed Care system implemented in Iowa is considered a challenge to individuals who may not have the support of their case manager or care coordinator in a plan to pursue competitive integrated employment. To address these issues, progress has occurred through Employment First efforts to improve coordination of services with managed care organizations and the development of an Employment First Guidebook, which has been shared across systems. Both of Iowa’s major managed care organizations have active members with regular representation on the Employment First Leadership team. IVRS increased reimbursement rates to community providers to align with Iowa Medicaid rates. Training is held at least annually for internal staff and community partners on the roles, responsibilities and expectations for service delivery. IVRS provides an annual Report Out of their service provision to CRPs, which is shared with local IVRS supervisors and available to stakeholders to enhance informed choice options.

B. who are minorities;

In FFY16, the IVRS minority ratio to non-minority service rate was 0.84 followed by a jump to .92 in FFY17 despite the fact that Iowa's population remains approximately 90% Caucasian.

IVRS supervisors participate on a number of boards in their areas and network with civic organizations and churches in an attempt to reach out to individuals who identify as minorities. IVRS is also involved in working with human rights and international and statewide service organizations, and other agencies or individuals who may be able to assist minority individuals in the rehabilitation process.

Outreach to individuals with disabilities who are underserved or underserved relates to services to individuals who are minorities. The IVRS caseload statistics indicate that minority representation exceeds minority representation in the population. IVRS met the currently identified standards and indicators from RSA including the service ratio for individuals with disabilities who are minorities. This will continue to be a focus of service efforts. Opportunities will be developed to identify strategies for minority groups in high school through service delivery to Potentially Eligible and students under Pre-Employment Transition Services.

For 2019, a MOA will be developed with the Omaha Indian Tribe to provide collaborative service delivery for their Native American population eligible for VR services through the Tribal Nation and/or through IVRS.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

IVRS is working with a State Planning team to develop regional educational centers for students who are Deaf so they do not have to live away from home to obtain an education. Currently, IVRS is involved with the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) and the Iowa Department of Education in working toward a more cohesive plan of serving students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in secondary school. IVRS has assigned a Rehabilitation Counselor to be at the ISD to improve access for VR services. Data is being collected to determine impact from the project. IVRS has covered costs associated with improving the counselor's signing and communication skills. Increasing time spent on the ISD campus not only gives students more access to the IVRS Counselor, but enhances relationships with ISD Administration while expanding capacity for the delivery of Pre-ETS to students, including those who are Potentially Eligible.

The SRC also recognized that individuals with disabilities who are 55 years of age or older have unique barriers to employment beyond their disability. It was recommended that IVRS develop a specific program for this population; subsequently IVRS entered into an agreement with the Department on Aging. As a result, IVRS Counselors are working in collaboration with Area Agency on Aging staff to provide enhanced employment services. Employment Specialists were hired to partner with the IVRS Counselor in identifying job goals, resources in communities, and businesses open to hiring older workers with knowledge of the needs for an aging population. When a disability has been experienced which creates a gap in work history and the individual is older, there are increased ways for discrimination to occur. Older workers have much to offer, but do need additional supports and training to prepare them for a return to work. This initiative allows for these supports. This is a unique Iowa collaborative effort to meet an identified need in our population.

Benefit Planning services are provided to each applicant of IVRS who receives Social Security benefits to allay fears about exploring community employment. The Benefit Planners designated at each area office receive specific training and connect to share information between them.

There continues to be a need in the State of Iowa for improved access to highly skilled benefit planners for stakeholders who are not connected to VR. Iowa does have a Social Security Workforce Incentive and Planning Assistance (WIPA program), but the two staff have limited capacity to serve all Iowans needing this service. IVRS did commit to external training of designated VR staff in benefits planning and continues to provide training opportunities for this cadre of staff in efforts to build internal capacity.

Exploration is currently occurring to develop a training program serving individuals with a diagnosis of autism. This involves a partnership with Village Northwest Community Rehabilitation Program and Northwest Iowa Community College. Efforts are being made to provide a CNC Machining program, which is in high demand in this area of the state. The intended program would help individuals participate in college-level training and work towards independent living and self-sufficiency.

IVRS has also received feedback regarding inconsistent delivery of vocational rehabilitation service delivery for farmers who have a disability impacting work tasks. IVRS will be partnering with the Rural Solutions of Easter Seal, as well as outreach to the United States Department of Agriculture in consideration of training topics. IVRS will engage in regular communication with the Director of the Easter Seal Rural Solutions program to timely address service issues if they occur. This includes:

Each time that Easter Seals of Iowa makes a referral of a farm family member to IVRS, the bureau chief will be notified to track service delivery; two to four meetings will occur between Easter Seals of Iowa and the bureau chief per year; concerns with any farmers with disabilities should be addressed immediately with the VR service delivery team including the bureau chief; and an overview and success story of collaborative efforts will be shared with the IVRS management team.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

The new RSA 911 Data Reporting Requirements have been added to the electronic case management system since the development of the last State Plan. There continues to be a need to improve understanding from all partners in the American Job Centers regarding issues such as common application, intake orientation for job seekers, as well as strategies for co-enrollment. Collaborative partnerships are occurring and the Workforce Center in Creston, Iowa serving the SW portion of the state was recognized in national WINTAC webinars for the joint service delivery efforts. IVRS staff were key partners in this effort.

WIOA provides IVRS and partners the opportunity to work collaboratively without duplicating services while expanding capacity to provide statewide services. Both IVRS and Workforce Centers are mandated to provide comprehensive services; however not everyone with a disability requires intensive services. IVRS provides guidance and technical assistance, which allows for a continuum of services based on each individual's need. This continuum of service model propels "disability" into the community-wide experience requiring all organizations and entities to create systems that work to achieve outcomes for all individuals as a result.

During meetings at the local level with Iowa Workforce Managers, IVRS staff continue to learn about services available to all individuals, regardless of disability. Integration in One Stop

programs allows individuals with disabilities to access all programs, workshops and services with IWD staff trained by IVRS.

Integration in One Stops may include joint staff meetings, shared business partners, and technical assistance or evaluation by IVRS. The focus of integration should support a job seeker to achieve employment with available services and supports from a One Stop team. Involvement in services from IVRS is based on a person's need for intensive services or necessary supports that are not available through Workforce Development. If a job seeker does not have a disability, IVRS is not generally involved; however, there may be questions IVRS is asked related to program and/or building access.

IVRS and IWD staffs create a braided service that no longer "hands-off" an individual between programs but instead, works together to achieve common outcomes. IVRS connects with Career Pathways training, National Career Readiness Certification, Adult Education and Literacy, etc., and provides technical assistance to these programs as applicable. IVRS coordinates the Individual Plan for Employment with the other partner's plan for employment, creating a "short-term" to "long-term" employment plan that creates opportunities for self-sufficiency and middle skills development for an individual.

Training and ongoing service development is essential to a fully integrated system. Providing an integrated service system to access employment opportunities continues to be refined among Iowa systems. Most IVRS supervisors are part of each Workforce area's Regional Board and participate in community conversations with employers. They become aware of business needs and potential options for employment in local communities, which benefit both Iowa job seekers and employers.

IVRS is also represented on the State Workforce Board and the state alignment committee addressing Department of Labor's concern on the make-up of the Regional Boards. This work will lead to recommendations for alignment of geographic areas in a different manner and more effectively utilize the limited dollars available for increasing direct services and decreasing administrative overhead. Although not fully implemented, sector partnerships have allowed IVRS job candidates to gain access to information pertaining to in-demand careers.

A major development occurring during the last year has been the implementation and expansion of regional disability access committees. These committees were formed at the regional board level through each of our major One Stop Centers. Through guidance from a statewide Disability Access Committee, formed through the state workforce board, each region was asked to develop their own committee. These are chaired by IVRS or IDB staff and include representation from core and required partners in the local area. These committees are tasked with identifying physical accessibility issues, program accessibility issues and ways to collaborate and partner together to increase employment outcomes through the One Stop Center for individuals with disabilities.

Physical accessibility studies have been completed at each of the Centers and reports have been compiled; the workforce center has already begun communication with regional managers and property owners in efforts to remedy accessibility issues. A survey was sent to all core staff regarding comfort levels in working with individuals with disabilities. 126 responses were received and information was gathered leading to the development of a disability sensitivity training program, which is being implemented across every region through a collaborative

partnership with the Disability Access Committees and the Disability Employment Initiative through the workforce centers.

After resolving the physical accessibility issues and implementing the disability sensitivity training, efforts will be taken to address program accessibility through identifying existing assistive technology resources at the One Stop Centers and how it relates to reasonable accommodations for job seekers who need assistance.

The workforce system may also provide assistance to individuals who are interested in starting their own businesses. IVRS and IDB offer the Iowa Self-Employment (ISE) program to individuals of their respective agencies. IVRS and IDB provide the financial assistance to start a business to job candidates with matching dollars provided by the candidate. When the candidate is served by both agencies, IVRS and IDB coordinate the services and the IPE. Workforce may also provide resources or contribute funding support to person's involved in ISE.

Iowa Self-Employment (ISE) has proven to be a successful option for employment in both FFY's 16 and 17, with 65 Iowans with disabilities becoming successful entrepreneurs. Iowa Workforce offices may also be involved to support, provide resources or advise IVRS or IDB job candidates in business ventures.

In response to the need to increase options for business services to IVRS and IDB job candidates, IVRS recently added "micro-business" to the services available through ISE. This is a new program, which has been supported by the State Rehabilitation Council. The SRC participated in a presentation of ISE and heard a number of success stories involving customized strategies resulting in self-employment. This will continue to be a major emphasis as we implement programming during the next two years. The ISE program is also changing supervision and will be integrated into the bureau manager in an effort to develop consistent practices through the whole state as well as prioritize self-employment options for all candidates through creating awareness and knowledge among our professional staff. We also hope to implement entrepreneurial strategies as part of a Pre-Employment Transition Service for students with disabilities. This will begin as a pilot project, with the goals for implementation by 2019.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

The IVRS program has been designed to provide a continuum of VR services by offering Pre-Employment Transition Services to any student with a disability in an educational program receiving special education services under an IEP or who are covered under the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, regardless of whether the student has applied for or been determined eligible for VR services. IVRS counselors are active in all public schools in the State of Iowa. Counselors are integrated into the school culture, and collaborate with LEA staff on services. IVRS staff work directly with a variety of school staff, including, but not limited to, Special Education Teachers, AEA, School Administration and School Counselors. Through this collaboration, students who are on an IEP or served under the provision of a 504 plan are identified their freshman year of high school. Staff collaborate to provide Pre-ETS services all four years of high school as needed by a student. As counselors provide Pre-ETS services in the schools, they are working 1:1 and in groups with students who are either active, or Potentially Eligible. Students get to know the counselor and learn about the strategies to assist them in building their employment skills. Students, parents, teachers or any interested person can request

VR services at any point in the process. Information will be shared with the student and family with consideration given for decision making to occur depending upon legal age. If it is apparent through counselor observation or through any school personnel and/or the job candidate or family member or employment services staff, that the student will require intensive services to successfully access employment, training, post-secondary education, or any other employment-related service, IVRS staff will meet with the individual student to discuss VR service options and determine eligibility for services, pending agreement by the student and their parent/guardian. IVRS staff employ a workforce model that uses a team approach to providing transition services. Utilization of Counselors, Associates, and Rehabilitation Assistants allows for increased capacity when serving high schools. IVRS works with LEA's via a collaborative process to create the school plan that outlines gaps in services in order to develop new or expanded activities in each of the required Pre-ETS areas. All students who apply for vocational rehabilitation services, even if they are still receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services, are subject to all relevant requirements for eligibility, order of selection and the development of the IPE. IVRS partners with the LEA's and WIOA partners such as IowaWorks, Iowa Department for the Blind and Iowa Community Colleges. Through these partnerships, IVRS is able to streamline service delivery and make referrals when needed. IVRS developed a MOA with Department of Education at the state level to outline roles and responsibilities between IVRS, LEAs and the DE. IVRS does not supplant or duplicate the services provided by the LEA, which is clearly outlined in the local school plans. The local plans outline responsibilities to maximize staff and community resources. IVRS targets students with IEPs and/or 504 Plans in outreach efforts. IVRS staff are expected to reach out to school counselors, school nurses, and other LEA staff in order to reach students with disabilities who have barriers to employment and who are not on an IEP or 504 Plan. AEA and School Social Workers provide outreach to underserved populations or students who may not traditionally be referred for services, but who have significant limitations to employment because of a mental health diagnosis. The provision of Pre-ETS may look different at each school depending on what is already being provided in that area and the needs of students at a particular school. Local school plans are written and Pre-ETS services are designed to fill needs in each local school. Activities are conducted using each office's workforce plan and leverage capacity from IowaWorks, Intermediary Networks, and other contract programs such as TAP and Making the Grade. Each fall, partners designate roles and responsibilities at fall refresher meetings. The template for services ensures that services are not supplanted, and that local plans provide quality Pre-ETS services for transition students. IVRS has developed several strategies to increase capacity and expand services. IVRS contracted to community colleges to establish an Intermediary Position that is solely focused on the provision of Pre-ETS to students with disabilities. Additionally, IVRS recognized a need in serving students with disabilities in the largest school district in Iowa and developed a new program called Transitioning to Employment and Advocating for Myself (TEAM). TEAM is a collaboration between Easter Seals, IVRS and Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS). The focus of TEAM is on developing and providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities who are attending all high schools within DMPS, including students covered under Section 511 and students who are potentially eligible for IVRS, prior to graduation. TEAM staff work collaboratively with the IVRS Counselors assigned to DMPS and the DMPS Work Experience Coordinators (WECs) to provide new or expanded services for students with disabilities in each of the five required activities for Pre-ETS. TEAM does not duplicate any class or program already provided by the district. Year-round services are provided to include activities that occur during the school day

and after school, as well as activities throughout the summer. In the state of Iowa the minimum age for the provision of transition services is age 14 and the maximum age is 21. Allowing transition services until the age of 21 provides time for students who may have gotten behind in credits to complete their high school education. This also allows additional time for students who may need longer than the typical 4 years to develop skills. Some examples of current strategies used by IVRS in serving students and youth are included below:

- IVRS has initiated a pilot project using “zSpace” - a virtual reality computer system that provides K-medical school curriculum through augmented reality. zSpace was purchased as a research project for two school districts specifically to provide benefit to students with disabilities. zSpace allows students to utilize exploration and experiential learning in a virtual reality environment. The zSpace devices were purchased through Pre-ETS dollars for two schools within the Charles City and Forest City school districts. The software, and Pre-ETS activities surrounding these devices, focus on STEM careers and provides students the ability to problem solve, build confidence, and develop interests in STEM careers within in-demand industries in their local areas. It provides students the opportunity to experience and demonstrate 21st century work skills while being exposed to STEM education. The purpose was also to answer specific questions including: do students who get exposure to stems education improve their academic skills, do students who are exposed develop more interest in stem-related fields of study, and does participation in zSpace at the local level create more employment connections with the business community? Local businesses in smaller communities often have a hard time attracting and attaining a skilled workforce so this project is hoping to identify if this can be beneficial. The measurable gains won't be visual until after two years so the aggregate data will be reviewed on a two-year basis.
- Staff are working with business and industry to identify curriculum specific to industry and how it connects to corresponding high school classes. IVRS has paired with IowaWorks to encourage participation in classes and career pathways offered for STEM careers.
- IVRS encourages STEM services for groups through the use of our third-party contracts. One contract developed Intermediary Network positions that connect with community college to focus on STEM related training programs.
- IVRS staff have been highly involved in creating job fairs and reverse job fairs, and inviting STEM-focused businesses.
- IVRS has initiated several strategies involving area office's developing a Pre-ETS summer camp that has an emphasis on STEM careers. Camps are designed to provide additional learning and development in the STEM career fields for both potentially eligible students as well as students on the IVRS caseload. In 2017, Burlington and Sioux City Area Offices were highlighted for their innovative approaches to summer work readiness programs.
- Staff are encouraged to focus on career pathways discussions with all job candidates whereas in the past, an individual might only consider a singular goal. Currently, staff are encouraged to assist individuals in focusing on how career pathways could move them out of poverty or lower class to the middle class.
- Strategies are also supported and linked to the Future Ready Iowa goal embraced by the State of Iowa. This effort creates linkages for students to utilize local employer information and creates a foundation that can guide informed choice for post-secondary training, employment participation, and high school curriculum development.
- IVRS provides and pays a fee for services for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) through programs such as Mason City Project SEARCH (when involving an eligible student with a disability), and Menu of Service activities with CRPs such as job shadows, and workplace readiness services.
- IVRS arranged Third-Party Cooperative Agreements and other contracts which include: Transition Alliance Program (TAP); Making the Grade (MTG); DMPS Project SEARCH; Waterloo Project SEARCH; IVRS Intermediary Networks; and Menu of Service

contracts the latter which funds services such as “Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experience, Discovery”, etc. Participation in these activities is paid on an individual basis for eligible job candidates through an authorization for services. Each of these help IVRS bridge the transition from High School to Adulthood with a focus on Employment. • IVRS utilizes Motivational Interviewing as an evidence-based counseling method. This technique is used in various areas, and especially when providing Pre-ETS (Counseling on Opportunities). Motivational Interviewing is a training topic that is led by the MI Cohort, and each office is connected to an MI Champion who can train and provide technique refreshers to local area office staff. • Discovery services and Assessment activities are funded by IVRS and used as a tool for transition students as a prelude to supported employment and customized employment. This is a best practice for students who will require intensive instructional training, assistive technology, and/or need career exploration and advocacy skill building. • Summer Programs leverage programming from community partners including IDB, IowaWORKS, and CRP providers. This allows participating students to access training and resources from a wider scope of services available from WIOA partners. • Education has been provided by IVRS to LEA staff, AEA administrators, and staff via fall meetings and throughout the school year regarding WIOA, service responsibilities, Pre-ETS and other pertinent legislation. • Counselors utilize technology to reach students who are attending school online. As IVRS develops and implements the continuum of services model, gaps and weaknesses within the system continue to be identified. A major barrier has been the inconsistent communication and understanding of roles and responsibilities between education partners, community providers and IVRS staff in the role of transition. Training, regular “check-ins,” ongoing communication and follow-up continue to be the primary considerations to resolve this. The following summarizes the coordination of services for students in transition: Systematic analysis and development of a continuum of services model for students and youth in transition; Development of trainings for parents, educators, and rehabilitation professionals on effective practices; Development of local and state plans to maximize resources and minimize duplication; Coordination of services within WIOA partnerships to expand opportunities for students/youth with disabilities; Expansion of third party cooperative agreements to create a seamless system of services and supports; Development of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key community partnerships to infuse opportunities within existing structure and reduce/eliminate duplication. Current efforts are focused on infusing current practices, programs, services, and plans to create the system of continuous service delivery that achieves a seamless system of transition. This includes employer-led, job-driven models into the continuum and expanding upon programs and services that produce outcomes so that IVRS and partners can continue to achieve results for students and youth in transition.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

IVRS has been an active participant in the Employment First initiative and as a result, more individuals who may have entered facility-based employment have obtained employment. This is evidenced by the data indicating that in 2014 IVRS served 403 individuals in SES and job Development spending \$971,295 dollars and had 252 successful employment outcomes. In 2017, we served 1,057 job candidates spending \$1,779,919 and had 406 successful employment outcomes.

Throughout the state, many of Iowa's Community Rehabilitation Programs have shown a commitment to competitive integrated employment (CIE) and helping facilitate an individual's movement towards this goal. CIE is a priority for most of SRC members and has been the driving force behind Iowa's Employment First efforts as well. As a result, there were changes made to the IVRS Menu of Employment Services in partnership with the Iowa Department of Human Services and supported by external service providers. The work in Iowa is done collaboratively and both a representative from DHS and the Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Community Providers remain key members of the Iowa Employment First Leadership Team.

IVRS will continue to participate in Employment First efforts - with its clear focus on helping individuals with the most significant disabilities access competitive integrated employment. The Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council, Disability Rights of Iowa, the Iowa Association of Community Providers, Iowa's Department of Human Rights, Iowa Client Assistance Program and the IVRS State Rehabilitation Council are key partners focused on equitable access and participation. National data from the Department of Labor in 2016 indicated there were 241,265 individuals in America earning subminimum wages. Iowa data shows a figure of 5,568 earning subminimum wages during that period.

IVRS acknowledges there exists a continued overreliance by community providers on sheltered services and sub-minimum wage placement as a long term placement, rather than a time limited service designed to move a job candidate closer to community employment. IVRS recognizes that all people with disabilities can find meaningful work in the community beyond the simulated work of a workshop setting, and we will continue to lend our efforts in educating providers on the importance of competitive, integrated, community based goals for consumers as is required by Federal regulation. There are a growing number of provider organizations who have actively participated and taken leadership roles in provider transformation efforts to support competitive, integrated employment occurring in the community. Contributing to this effort was the service delivery of the Employment First efforts.

As previously discussed The Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment and the Disability Employment Initiative are collaborative partners in helping IVRS promote Employment First.

3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

IVRS and the Department of Education wrote a Memorandum of Agreement that outlines the roles, responsibilities and financial obligations that exist between IVRS and the Local Education Agencies/ School Districts. This MOA was signed by both parties and implementation and education was provided at each local district individually by IVRS staff. The DE provided initial web-based training to Administration via their web site, and more training is anticipated in conjunction with IVRS efforts.

The state MOA is an agreement between IVRS and the DE that identifies that instructional training support is the responsibility of the LEA. The instructional training coverage may be needed during the school day, after school, or in the summer, as long as the student is covered under an IEP. The LEA's do not typically have the staff capacity to provide instructional

coaching in the community, which leaves students without access to necessary employment supports. These supports must be written and agreed upon by the IEP team in advance, however there are times when students who were not planning on securing employment have a job opportunity that they accept, require an IEP amendment quickly to add in these services.

The local IVRS offices are responsible for developing plans with the LEAs in their area. These plans outline the services and activities that IVRS staff will deliver within the schools and the services and activities that the LEA will deliver. This is written to support the MOA developed. School plans are signed by the school administrator and IVRS staff.

The MOA specifies how IVRS and Education will work collaboratively to serve students in transition. The agreement stipulates when IVRS and the local education agency are working together with a student, IVRS and the LEA will jointly deliver pre-employment transition services.

The agreement recognizes the roles and responsibilities of each organization and the financial obligations. The agreement recognizes the expertise each entity brings to the transition of students with disabilities. As noted, LEA will provide or pay for instructional training services when students participate in a Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experience which IVRS funds. Both services are discussed as part of IEP planning in which IVRS staff and others participate.

Because IVRS' expertise is in the knowledge of work, employment services and business relationships, IVRS assumes responsibility for job development and employer development to assist a student in obtaining employment. Local school plans identify a collaborative approach to transition planning and include additional partners who may be able to assist in facilitating a student's progress. At the local level, schools, IVRS, Workforce and other partners discuss the essential components of Pre-Employment Transition Services and coordinate who will do what activity based upon the capacity and supports available.

Goals and objectives are determined based on the local school plans and MOAs that were developed in a collaborative process. At this time, school plans do not include a measure for performance, rather implying that services outlined and described in the plan will be completed and/or provided to students served. As data is gathered, IVRS staff communicate this during fall refreshers and team meetings. One example could be the number of students referred by a school from year to year, or the number of students served by a counselor during a school year.

Each IVRS office is expected to provide a summer program for students working in conjunction with schools. This effort has expanded to include a variety of other partners each summer including business, Workforce, Intermediary Networks, and community colleges in Iowa.

Additionally, IVRS initiated a grant to help expand capacity for Pre-ETS in 113 high schools under a contract for an Intermediary Network staff. This initiative has been described in other sections of this report and boasts a target of serving 3,344 students in special education programs next fiscal year, noting that 2,388 services were provided the initial program year.

Understanding and implementation of the MOA principles is a major challenge facing IVRS and local school districts. We are working on consistency within the state, with the understanding there are significant training needs regarding roles and responsibilities among IVRS, school and partner staff. This lack of understanding was confirmed through feedback gathered in the SRC survey.

Current strategies include further IVRS internal training, statewide webinars, increased communication through the Department of Education School Leader Newsletter, inclusion in Community of Practice Webinars and further integration of joint training opportunities. The Iowa Coalition of Integration and Employment will continue to address transition planning as a topic in their quarterly meetings, and report progress and concerns to IVRS as a continued part of our statewide needs assessment.

k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

In FFY16-17, IVRS determined 9,770 individuals eligible for services. In both PY18 and in PY19, IVRS estimates determining 5,250 eligible individuals for services. On a weekly basis, IVRS removes all individuals on the Most Significantly Disabled waiting list. The anticipated SD release in PY18 will be 3,640 and in PY19, 3,500. The decrease is due to staff capacity and budget restraints combined with serving an expanding population of potentially eligible students which significantly impacts staff time.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. The VR Program;

Based on current projections, we believe that approximately 12,400 individuals will receive services from IVRS in 2018 and in 2019. The numbers are based on the representation in the current caseload.

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

In PPY 18 plans to serve 6,267 individuals who are MSD under Title 1 of which 1,077 are supported employment service individuals who are MSD under Title I with an average service cost of \$817/case annually.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

PY17: For Priority Category 2 (MSD) we are planning to serve 6,907 individuals; estimated that 870 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 1,100 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be \$5,540,035. For Priority Category 1 (SD), IVRS anticipates serving 7,863 individuals; estimated 1,275 exiting with employment after receiving services, IVRS estimates that 1,200 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$6,272,417. For Priority Category 0 (OE), IVRS anticipates to serve 20 individuals; estimated 5 will exit with employment and 4 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$36,710. PY18: For Priority Category 2 (MSD) we are planning to serve 6,267 individuals; estimated that 890 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 825 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be 5,122,469. For Priority Category 1 (SD), IVRS anticipates serving 6,122 individuals; estimated 1,200 exiting with employment after receiving services, IVRS estimates

that 485 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$5,019,086. For Priority Category 0 (OE), IVRS anticipates serving 11 individuals; estimated 3 will exit with employment and 2 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$20,613. PY19: For Priority Category 2 (MSD) we are planning to serve 6,716 individuals; estimated that 953 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 884 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be 5,489,561. For Priority Category 1 (SD), IVRS anticipates serving 5,677 individuals; estimates 976 exiting with employment after receiving services, IVRS estimates that 450 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$4,654,378. For Priority Category 0 (OE), IVRS anticipates serving 6 individuals; estimates 2 will exit with employment and 1 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$12,390.

3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

Each week, IVRS removes individuals from the SD waiting list once the agency services all individuals who are MSD. Individuals who are Most Significantly Disabled go directly into service. There has not been any “Others Eligible” removed from the waiting list since 2009. If not served immediately, individuals who are SD may remain on the waiting list for anywhere between one week to three months before being released into services. Due to Order of Selection, it is anticipated the PPY 17 numbers will be 720 OE and 0 SD on the waiting list. PY 18 approximately 765 individuals will be on the OE list and 50 SD on the waiting list. In PY19 it is estimated approximately 810 individuals on the OE list and 150 on the SD list. This is due to the time and resources needing to be allocated towards transition services and serving the potentially eligible individual (student) in our secondary school system as well as a stagnant budget and limited FTE capacity.

4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

PY18: Individuals who are MSD are served under Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$5,122,469 with an average service costs of \$817.36. Individuals who are SD are served under Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$5,019,086 with an average service costs of \$819.82. Individuals who are OE are served under the Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$20,613 with an average service costs of \$1,873.91. PY19: Individuals who are MSD are serviced under Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$5,489,561 with an average service costs of \$817.36. Individuals who are SD are served under Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$4,654,378 with an average service costs of \$819.82. Individuals who are OE are served under the Title I funds at an estimated cost of \$12,390 with an average service costs of \$2,065.00.

I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The SRC meetings between 2017 and 2018 involved communication related to updates in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; a review a proposed changes to IVRS policy; the Administrator's Report outlining current and new IVRS initiatives, and progress towards goal attainment. The results of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was shared with the all SRC members and IVRS supervisory staff. Implications from the CSNA and WIOA required that IVRS adopt changes in Policy, which were also subsequently reviewed and approved by the SRC. In accordance with recommendations made by the SRC and in conjunction with Unified State Plan, the following goals were established for IVRS:

GOAL 1: IVRS should maintain a close link to the Future Ready Iowa goals to ensure all of Iowa's workforce will represent a continuum of the most advanced, diverse, skilled and future-ready workers in the nation. Iowa's employers will have access to these workers and the supports they may need to employ them. In State Plan discussions, it was agreed that more work with businesses is needed to help them understand how to attract and retain qualified individuals with disabilities as part of their workforce. This goal remains essential to the economic success of Iowa's businesses.

Outreach and/or training continues to be provided across the state to employers on Disability Etiquette, Reasonable Accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities, Act, WIOA requirements, Assistive Technology, Work incentives and available resources at IVRS.

STRATEGY — IVRS will work with employers to develop their skills in hiring people with disabilities and ensuring they provide an accessible and welcoming work environment. IVRS will participate in regional workforce boards so businesses have expertise available in creating opportunities for persons with disabilities. This will be measured by the number of business accounts developed by each IVRS office. IVRS will also continue to inform businesses about Section 503 requirements for federal contractors, and utilize initiatives like the Talent Acquisition Portal at the national level. IVRS continues efforts to strengthen transition services for our secondary school students ensuring they develop work skills leading to gainful competitive employment.

GOAL 2: All Iowa youth will be afforded the best educational and career opportunities in the nation. Iowans will be provided access to high quality education, training and career opportunities. Prior discussions with the State Plan and the SRC involved a need to "bridge the gap" between the occupations that IVRS job candidates pursue and businesses with a demand for middle skills.

STRATEGY — IVRS staff will work with local education agencies to help them understand the career skill gap, programs available to students to become employed in Fast track career jobs, and career pathways that will lead to employment. IVRS will support STEM training to help students and youth achieve access in higher employment. IVRS will also provide counseling and guidance services on labor market information and the opportunities available with appropriate training. Information will be provided by IVRS to youth about internships, apprenticeship training and post-secondary options.

IVRS continues to promote the Employment first philosophy that work is the first and preferred option for all individuals, including youth. High expectations to build towards successful careers are discussed in initial conversations by IVRS, and staff are able to access students as early as age 14.

IVRS has invested resources in developing school-to-work programs to include various initiatives such as Project Search, TEAM, iJAG, Intermediary Networks, TAP, Making the Grade, all of which are specific to youth.

GOAL 3: Iowa will improve the structure, accessibility and administration of workforce delivery systems across the state. Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

Strategy - IVRS will support integration and coordination of services between IVRS and Workforce Development offices through a collaborative approach. Development of the electronic case management system so that data can be shared across systems to evaluate its effectiveness continues. A common application form and how information is shared across programs to avoid duplication remains a gap. IVRS will provide expertise to Workforce partners so that job candidates can access services and achieve success without the need of IVRS intensive services. The work for the Disability Access Committees is focused on building capacity and aligning applicable services to ensure all individuals can access both physically and through service programs the necessary employment services to assist them through the One Stop Centers. IVRS employs two assistive technology specialists who work with local offices in identifying assistive technologies and/or accommodations that enhance an individual's ability to live and work. Both positions can assist in developing Iowa systems to ensure their accessibility, in addition to providing support to individuals with disabilities, and technical expertise to business and industry in hiring people with disabilities. IVRS also partners with Easter Seals of Iowa's Assistive Technology Program, with a specific focus on the AT needs for rural job candidates.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

IVRS places significant priority on Supported Employment Services (SES). Individuals who are served in SES are those with the Most Significant Disabilities. Two additional employment services were implemented to support SES for individuals who have never worked or not experienced successful employment in a competitive integrated environment. These include "Discovery services and "Customized Employment." Many SES Plans include the need for Customized Employment, and the IVRS Menu of Services has been updated to reflect this.

A youth (or student) who is eligible for IVRS may also have a plan for SES written. SES is competitive employment in an integrated setting consistent with and individual's strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The eligible individual and their IVRS counselor plan for SES, using a team approach for service delivery. Comparable services and benefits are used to the maximum extent possible and all SES are provided in the most integrated setting consistent with the individual's informed choice.

Supported Employment Services may include:

An assessment of the need for Supported Employment; the provision of qualified job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the worksite; job coaching and employer development services; regular observation or supervision of the individual; follow-up services including regular contact with the employer, the individual, their family, advocates or other authorized representatives to reinforce and stabilize job placement; facilitation of natural supports at the worksite; extended supports, and any other services necessary to achieve an employment outcome.

Supported Employment Services can be provided for a period of time that does not exceed 24 months except for special circumstances when the counselor and the eligible individual jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the Individual Plan for Employment.

IVRS counselors and supervisors closely monitor the quality of services throughout the duration of SES to insure that services are appropriate, timely, and cost-effective and of the same quality as services provided under Title I. Many individuals who are served in SES are funded by the Title I program since the funding available under Title VI cannot support the number of individuals who require SES. This will be monitored in the future as it is expected that the line allocation for federal SES funding will be eliminated putting additional strain on the case service budget.

As part of the VR State Plan, IVRS completed the mandatory Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to determine the current needs of Iowans with disabilities, as well as assess the services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs. Various changes to the original Supported Employment Services process were implemented to address issues such as accessibility, consistency, paperwork redundancies and a lack of understanding of various SES “systems.”

IVRS continues to fine-tune service delivery processes designed to contribute to an increase in understanding, improved relationships, and ultimately, better outcomes for individuals receiving SES. Making this a reality will require ongoing communication and collaboration between all systems in the delivery of SES for individuals in Iowa. Refining current SES processes, coupled with enhancing both communication and collaboration from SES providers are established as primary priorities going forward. IVRS’ staff are making a concerted effort to connect with current and potential partners, provide mutually-beneficial/joint training(s), and facilitate ongoing opportunities for dialogue. A continued focus is on increasing work hours and wages to enhance self-sufficiency. Data reflects decreased hours and wages are being obtained in our average SES outcomes. We are serving more individuals with complex needs and caseload sizes have not changed, with increasing demands on staff for the provision of transition services. Additional training in the areas of customized employment are being designed to upgrade VR and Provider staff knowledge with the goal leading to improved delivery of services.

Flexibility is needed for job candidates with disability factors that might require fewer hours, as well as those with the ability to increase work hours and become self-sufficient. If disability factors indicate a reduced number of hours, supported employment services are provided and before a case record is closed successfully, the area office supervisor reviews the case to ensure it meets the job candidates stated goals, skills, IPE and functional capacity.

Continuing goals for individuals receiving supported employment services include increasing the average number of hours worked and client wages, and decreasing dependence on public support. IVRS is making an effort to collaborate with various government entities including the Department of Human Services Medicaid Waiver program to ensure that adequate funding will be available to pay for supported employment. Efforts to blend and braid funds, as well as establish uniform payment systems among state partners continues to be viewed as IVRS priority areas going forward. This will continue to be a challenge with federal funding level changes expected in the area of Supported Employment.

An analysis of IVRS data show that rehabilitation rates dropped from 59.66 in FFY14 to 57.35 in FFY15 to 52.61 in FFY16. Part of this can be attributed to the Employment First philosophy that has been embraced and infused into the culture at IVRS.

EF opportunities are continuing to draw attention to Iowa and facilitate changes in our systems. Competitive integrated employment is the ultimate goal for all Iowans. Iowa's efforts have been enhanced through the collaboration occurring between the Employment First Leadership Team, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment/Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Disability Employment Initiative. In accordance with EF, Iowa is committed to strengthening employment services for people with disabilities, improving customer service, and breaking down artificial barriers. The adoption of EF has involved changes in both policy and service provision in Iowa. Specific focus was on changing the employment culture of Iowa with an emphasis on competitive integrated employment. Community Provider organizations participated in pilot efforts to transform their organizations to become high achieving employment providers.

Employment First generated a significant change in the way services were contracted for - or delivered in Iowa. IVRS wrote more employment plans to give an increased number of individuals an opportunity to reach employment.

Leaders from state programs are focused on coordinating career and employment services between state partners to support competitive integrated employment options for individuals with the most severe disabilities. IVRS continues to have a primary focus on provider transformation, training, capacity building, and establishing a shared vision for community, integrated employment. For the past three fiscal years, IVRS realized an increase in the number of individuals served through supported employment services.

The traditional model of Supported Employment Services (SES) involved upfront planning regarding identification of employers in the community at which a job candidate could find placement. That model involved more emphasis on the placement and evaluation of performance at a job site rather than actual training requirements. When considering the reason for IVRS recidivism rates, an interdisciplinary team analyzed SES and recognized that a significant lack of formalized training influenced outcomes. Efforts were implemented to significantly enhance training of professionals and job candidates alike. The following table shows a summary of successful outcomes for job candidates who received supported services.

2012: 148 job candidates, earned an average of \$7.79/hr., working 19 hours per week

2013: 150 job candidates, earned an average of \$7.85/hr., working 18 hours per week

2014: 252 job candidates, earned an average of \$8.12/hr., working 20 hours per week

2015: 333 job candidates, earned an average of \$8.39/hr., working 19 hours per week

2016: 382 job candidates, earned an average of \$8.65/hr., working 17 hours per week

2017: 406 job candidates, earned an average of \$8.84/hr., working 16 hours per week

Over time, the number served in supported employment has increased as well as the average hourly wage.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

Priority areas for IVRS are based upon input from the SRC, our comprehensive statewide needs assessment and strategic plan. Priority areas include increasing employment outcomes and the labor market participation rate for individuals with disabilities; improve transition services consistent with the goals of the pre-employment transition vision; expand business networking and continue to expand Employment First efforts for all individuals with the belief that everyone can work with the right services and the right supports.

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

Results from Iowa stakeholders were captured in survey responses provided by the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment and shared with SRC members and IVRS staff. These results are included in Section J. of this document (Statewide Assessment).

Future-Ready Iowa goals supports and builds on the executive vision established by Iowa's Governor: • Goal 1: The State of Iowa will create 200,000 new jobs • Goal 2: State of Iowa families will realize a 25% increase in their family incomes • Goal 3: State of Iowa youth will be afforded the best education in the nation • Goal 4: State of Iowa government costs will be reduced by 15%

Through the various services, supports, and programs, IVRS wants to increase the income levels of Iowa families, not only through direct services to eligible job candidates but also for the thousands of job seekers and youth who are seeking employment and need a more accessible system to support them. For Iowa's labor exchange system, this has meant creating a system that utilizes resources efficiently and aligning governmental programs in a manner that responds to and supports the needs of private business, while developing a skilled and ready workforce.

Through implementation of career pathways and infusing sector strategies across systems, IVRS is committed to serving the underserved and unserved citizenry by closing educational and employment gaps to end disparities based on disability, ethnicity, race, class, and geographic location. By expanding the use of technology, coordinating and collaborating on service delivery through the alignment of services and supports, Iowa can work more efficiently and effectively. IVRS continues to provide guidance and expertise to the integrated system as a whole, to serve all individuals with disabilities and support a better-prepared workforce. Some examples of IVRS efforts include the following:

- Community colleges throughout the state often collaborate with IVRS when determining whether a student with a disability will be granted accommodations. IVRS is often an integral part of this process with IVRS staff providing guidance to job candidates on completing the request for accommodations. When a Student Accommodation Request (SAR) is not available,

or more information is necessary, the college will contact IVRS to determine if more information can be obtained. In these situations, with a signed release of information, IVRS provides the eligibility face sheet to the college. This allows the college's Disability Services staff access to not only the job candidate's limitations, but also the diagnoses used to make the job candidate eligible for IVRS services. This document serves as a starting point, should the college need additional information. The diagnosis is on the IVRS Face Sheet and includes the name of the doctor that can be contacted for follow up and additional documentation.

- IVRS has long tradition of encouraging job candidates with disabilities to further their education in an industry-recognized credential program area.
- Significant in the discussion on preparing a Future Ready workforce is Iowa's goal that seventy percent of Iowans will have post-secondary credentials by the year by 2025. Additional fields have been included in the IVRS case management system to track attendance in or attainment of additional credentials besides the common, formal college level degrees including data fields for training received that lead to industry-specific credentials as required by WIOA. This information is important in the analysis of training that prepares individuals for middle skills jobs that do not require a post-secondary degree.
- IVRS employs a full-time Business Relations Specialist who oversee business initiatives and provides training to internal staff and external partners, including businesses in Iowa.
- IVRS is tracking numbers and services provide to populations who are unserved or underserved which are reported to SRC members. There are current initiatives to improve specific to individuals who are Deaf, Mental Illness, as well as individuals with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities. Iowa's minority population continues to lag behind non-minority for the state employment rate, so continued diversity awareness events will be emphasized at the local office to identify strategies to promote positive employment trends for our minority population. This is consistent with the minority employment committee for the State Workforce Board.

According to the Iowa Data Center, in 2015 there were 1,247,249 households in Iowa, with 7.7% (roughly 96,000) families living below the poverty level. The unemployment rate during this same time period was 4.2%, although the unemployment rate for Iowans with a disability was 9.6%. The population of Iowans 5 years and over who have a disability is listed at 11.9% (368,036). Iowans between the ages of 18 - 64 with a disability who were employed in 2015 numbered 50,180. IVRS data shows there has not been significant change in the number of competitive integrated outcomes in the past three fiscal years. In FFY15, there were 2,296 CIE outcomes; FFY16, there were 2,224 CIE outcomes; and in FFY17, there were 2,080 CIE outcomes. There has not been significant change in the hourly wage. In FFY15, the hourly wage rate = \$11.72; FFY16 = \$11.84; FFY17 = \$12.03. Part of the reason for this small change may be due to hourly wages increasing with the reduction in unemployment.

Hours of work have had a slight reduction from 33 hours per week in 2014 to 31 hours worked in 2016. IVRS had an increase in supported employment outcomes that likely impacted this. The emphasis at IVRS continues to be a focus on Employment First and serving individuals who are most significantly disabled. Many of these cases usually work fewer hours during the workweek.

Changes in WIOA, the emphasis on SES cases and the continued focus and expansion on Pre-Employment Transition Services, especially for the potentially eligible create capacity issues for IVRS staff and changes in priorities.

According to the 2017 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, only 35.9 percent of U.S. civilians with disabilities ages 18-64 living in the community had a job, compared to 76.9 percent for people without disabilities. However, this is an increase from the previous year, which was 34.9 percent. Out of almost 20 million working-age people with disabilities, only 7.4 million people with disabilities have a job in 2016. A new poll released by RespectAbility shows that millions of people with disabilities are striving to work and that they want to work.

Iowa is one of the top ten states for workers with disabilities according to the poll information. Iowa ranks eight with 175,367 persons with disabilities between the ages of 18-64 and 80,146 of them are employed. This is 45.9% percentage of persons with disabilities employed. Efforts continue to provide services that decreases the gap between persons with and without disabilities with a purpose of increasing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate at greater numbers in the labor market.

B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

IVRS has been tracking performance through previous RSA Standards and Indicators. Beginning in the fall of 2018, performance evaluations and agency goals are being revised to reflect the WIOA performance measures. Data is in the process of being collected, but it is too early to do much analysis beyond obtaining a basic beginning level.

IVRS case management system in May 2018 has uploaded UI wages for our first quarter closures that have been recorded by employers on Iowa's Workforce Development Agency System. The wages were reported on the third quarter RSA 911 submission.

The case management system is also set up to collect the credential attainment for all participants. Staff enter the credential earned during participation and within one year of exit.

Iowa Workforce Development has set up a database to record business services provided by IVRS and other partners. IVRS has a link on our case management system to the business link database. IVRS staff record the services they provided to the business directly into the database. Each month, IWD will send IVRS a spreadsheet of all business services recorded by IVRS staff. IVRS sends out the summary of services provided by area office, staff, business, location of business and the services provided. Iowa has decided to use retention (wage data) and penetration (number of employers receiving services against all employers as primary measures.

WIOA Performance Measures 1-3: IVRS does have a process in place to upload UI wages and will be working through that process in future quarters. The data was provided in the third quarter RSA 911 entry. WIOA Performance Measures 4: IVRS has in place a way to track credential attainment, Staff are able to enter directly in the case management program and this information will be available for 911 reporting. WIOA Performance Measure 5: Staff have been trained for direct entry on measurable skill gain into the IVRS case management program. IVRS is able to pull this data for 911 reporting and we are formulating baseline data. Performance Measure 6: IVRS is reporting on business services through a common workforce development tool. We are focused on retention and penetration as critical measures.

C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

IVRS will support individuals to achieve competitive integrated employment through a variety of strategies that meet the needs and individual goals of the job candidate. These include: development and access into career pathways; creation and inclusion into STEM activities; placement in competitive, integrated community employment; providing transition services including pre-employment transition services to VR eligible and potentially eligible students; expansion of business outreach activities; and integration and support of the workforce development system to create access and achieve expanded employment outcomes for the Future Ready Iowa workforce.

Efforts have continued to focus on meeting our federal 15% allocation of pre-employment transition expenses. We struggled in 2015, met the goal for 2016 and appear currently on track for 2017.

m. Order of Selection

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:

A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

On a weekly basis, IVRS reviews the Order of Selection and makes a decision based upon input from the IVRS budget team. Currently all individuals on the Most Significantly Disabled waiting list are served immediately. As of 11/20/17, there were 676 job candidates on the waiting list - all are Others Eligible. This is 146 less than 8/31/17 and 28 more than a year ago on October 31, 2016. Individuals are removed from the waiting list based upon eligibility priority and their application date, with those who Most Significantly Disabled receiving priority, then those are Significantly Disabled and then Others Eligible. State Rehabilitation Council members are provided updates on the IVRS waiting list information at quarterly SRC meetings. IVRS staff are updated on waiting list information weekly.

B. The justification for the order.

Currently IVRS is not able to serve all categories on the waiting list. The Budget Team has decided not to restrict the movement of MSD job candidates into services. Job candidates with Significant Disabilities and Others Eligible will continue to be placed on waiting lists for services. IVRS was able to maximize federal monies available for programming during the past two years. That has not traditionally been the case and we continue to view staff capacity and the meeting of the 15% Pre-Ets goals as impacting capacity and financial cash flow. This past year, we received a \$52,472 decrease in April, 2018 impacting our 2018 budget as well as being carried through our 2019 state budget year. It is anticipated with decreased funding available and the growth of the potentially eligible being served, that we will see a growth in the waiting list numbers. This was also a recommendation from the SRC. IVRS has developed a fiscal forecasting model to address our ability to project financial sustainability based upon historical review of expenditures. Beyond a funding capacity, the waiting list is significantly impacted by a staff capacity issue. In 2018, IVRS moved from 255 FTE positions to a legislative allocated 244 positions. We currently have 239 filled. Each position is reviewing individually when vacant and IVRS has to justify to our state Department of Management the reasons to fill a position. We are not expanding FTE positions at the current time. The demand being taken in service of an

expanding potentially eligible caseload impacts field capacity. IVRS currently releases the names of individuals for whom services could be initiated on a weekly basis. This allows IVRS to become more efficient in caseload management techniques and anticipate service provision. The budget team meets on the goals for release on a monthly basis. Management staff reviews a variety of issues including taking into consideration the budget sustainability model and the Rehabilitation Services Bureau field capacity. This discussion occurs during Budget Team meetings. Decisions are based upon staff capacity and our Financial Sustainability Model.

C. The service and outcome goals.

PY17: For Priority Category 2 (MSD) we are planning to serve 6,907 individuals; estimated that 870 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 1,100 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be \$5,540,035. For Priority Category 1 (SD), IVRS anticipates serving 7,863 individuals; estimated 1,275 exiting with employment after receiving services, IVRS estimates that 1,200 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$6,272,417.

For Priority Category 0 (OE), IVRS anticipates to serve 20 individuals; estimated 5 will exit with employment and 4 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$36,710.

PY18: For Priority Category 2 (MSD) we are planning to serve 6,267 individuals; estimated that 890 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 825 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be 5,122,469. For Priority Category 1 (SD), IVRS anticipates serving 6,122 individuals; estimated 1,200 exiting with employment after receiving services, IVRS estimates that 485 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$5,019,086. For Priority Category 0 (OE), IVRS anticipates serving 11 individuals; estimated 3 will exit with employment and 2 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$20,613.

PY19: For Priority Category 2 (MSD) we are planning to serve 6,716 individuals; estimated that 953 of these individuals will exit with employment after receiving services, and 884 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of these services will be 5,489,561. For Priority Category 1 (SD), IVRS anticipates serving 5,677 individuals; estimates 976 exiting with employment after receiving services, IVRS estimates that 450 will exit without employment after receiving services. The cost of services will be \$4,654,378. For Priority Category 0 (OE), IVRS anticipates serving 6 individuals; estimates 2 will exit with employment and 1 will exit without employment following service delivery. The cost of services will be \$12,390.

The number of closures for each Priority Category is based on actual numbers from the prior year as well as historical percentages. The number of individuals IVRS is planning to serve is based on the size of the caseload and the percentage of job candidates within each Priority Category. The costs of services are based on the projected year case expenditures based on the prior year's actual expenditures. Our management team meets on a monthly basis to discuss case flow projections, budget expenditures, and initiatives influencing service delivery flow. We are anticipating an increase in the waiting list as time demands are being allocated for potentially eligible students and pre-employment transition service delivery.

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

The time within which goals are to be achieved are for Priority 1 = 33.4 months, Priority 2 = 44.8 months and Priority 3 = 62.6 months. Based on current projections, we believe that approximately 12,400 individuals will receive services from IVRS in the coming year. The numbers below are based on the representation in the current caseload. Actual outcomes may vary, as we continue to see change in the way the caseload breaks out in the waiting list categories.

Projections for PY2017 are serving 6,907 MSD individuals, category 2. 870 are estimated to exist with employment after receiving services and 1,100 are estimated to exist without employment after receiving services. It is projected to take 25.8 months to achieve their goal at a cost of \$5,540,035. 7,863 SD individuals from category 1 will be served with 1,275 exiting with employment after receiving services and 1,200 exiting without employment after receiving services in a time span of 30.2 months for a cost of services of \$6,272,417. In the OE category (level 0), 20 individuals are expected to be served with 5 exiting with employment and 4 exiting without employment. The time to achieve their goals is 58.4 months at a cost of \$36,710.

In PY 18 it is projected to serve 6,267 MSD individuals with 890 exiting with employment and 825 exiting without employment in a time span of 25.8 months and a total cost of \$5,122,469. We anticipate serving 6,122 SD individuals with 1,053 exiting with employment and 485 exiting without employment in a time span of 30.2 months and a total cost of \$5,019,086. We anticipate serving 11 individuals in the OE category with 3 exiting with employment and 2 exiting without employment in a time span of 58.4 months and a total cost of \$20,613,

In PY19, it is estimated we will serve 6,716 individuals who are MSD with 953 exiting with employment and 884 exiting without employment. This will occur in a time span of 25.8 months and a cost of \$5,489,561. We estimate 5,677 individuals who are SD being served with 976 exiting with employment and 450 exiting without employment in a time span of 30.2 months and a total cost of \$4,654,378. We estimate serving 6 individuals from the OE category with 2 exiting with employment and 1 exiting without employment in a time span of 58.4 months and a total cost of \$12,390.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is an eligibility program based on the nature and function of the individual's disability as it pertains to preparing for, obtaining maintaining, and advancing in employment. Only a qualified rehabilitation counselor or a supervisor has the authority to determine if a person is eligible for services and the priority category to which they are assigned. In order to make an accurate decision on eligibility IVRS requires receipt of medical, psychological, or psychiatric records, and statements from the individual with the disability concerning the disability impact, to provide verification of the disability and the nature and extent of the disability on the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain, maintain, or advance in employment. Students in transition (age 21 and under) and youth in transition (age 24 and under) may provide documentation of their disability by submitting their Individual Education Plan (IEP). This document is then used by the IVRS counselor to complete the RSA Coding Rubric. IVRS staff may request a statement from the school psychologist that reports a job candidate as demonstrating a "pattern of behavior consistent with (intellectual disability, learning disability), but this is not required if the rubric is completed. According to the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title I - The Rehabilitation Act, if a state vocational rehabilitation program

cannot serve all eligible individuals who apply it must develop a waiting list for services based on the significance of the disability. The following provides definitions of the waiting list categories:

- “Individual with a disability means an individual (i) Who has a physical or mental impairment as identified by the RSA Coding; (ii) Whose impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and (iii) Who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services.” (34 CFR 361.5(b)(28))
- An individual who meets this definition and who requires only one service for a duration of six months or less is considered as meeting the priority for services category 6, “Other’s Eligible” (OE) (For RSA Coding this is category 0 OE).
- Individuals who demonstrate to have at least 2 or fewer functional limitations that are serious in nature and who require multiple services over an extended period of time are considered as meeting the priority for services category 4, “Significantly Disabled” (SD). (For RSA Coding this is category 1 SD)
- Individuals who demonstrate to have at least 3 or more functional limitations that are serious in nature and who require multiple services over an extended period of time are considered as meeting the priority for services category 2, “Most Significantly Disabled” (MSD). (For RSA Coding this category 2 MSD)
- Services over an extended period of time is defined as by nature and extent of the service, not due to lack of action or time delay by the VR agency or staff. The decision of eligibility should be completed within 10 working days of having received the medical information. The priority of service may be increased and updated later as more medical information is received. As such, an eligibility justification is a process for the rehabilitation counselor to learn about the individual’s presenting disability and gain understanding of the implications. Through a process of analysis, the rehabilitation counselor must consider the impact of the disabling conditions upon the person’s ability to work, and then synthesize the information to determine if the individual can be successful with IVRS simply providing technical assistance and consultation to existing systems or if the individual requires intensive services to be successful in employment. An individual who has a disability as determined eligible for Social Security benefits shall be considered to be an individual with a significant disability and presumed to be eligible for IVRS services, provided that individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual. When determining the priority for services the counselor must ascertain how the functional impediment affects the job candidate in seven critical areas: mobility, work tolerance, work skills, self—direction, self—care, communication, and interpersonal skills. The manifestation of the disability must be the cause of the impediment and functional limitations and cannot be a function of environmental factors or choices made by the job candidate. The analysis of the impact of the seven functional limitation areas is the basis for eligibility decisions and placement on the waiting list based upon the priority category being served. The job candidate may request mediation or appeal of the counselor’s decision, and the Iowa Client Assistance Program may help with that request. The SRC approved a policy this past year to support eligibility for individuals who are at immediate risk of losing their employment. Through analysis of the situation, if it is determined that an individual with a disability is gainfully employed, but at risk of losing their position, then IVRS can determine immediate eligibility and provide the agreed upon services in an effort to save the job. If additional services are later identified or requested, then the Order of Selection criteria would be followed.

2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

NA

n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

IVRS funded Supported Employment Services (SES) for 877 individuals in FFY2016, using both Part B and Title VI Funds and Part B Title I funds. Approximately \$240,942 Title VI funds were used on 162 individuals and a total of 877 individuals were provided Supported Employment Services in the amount of \$1,521,901 with \$1,280,959 from Title I funds. FFY2017 approximately \$240,474 Title VI funds were used on 288 individuals and a total of 1,077 individuals were provided Supported Employment Services in the amount of \$1,831,876 with \$1,591,402 from Title I funds. It is anticipated that FFY2018 that approximately 300 individuals will receive SES using Title VI funds in the amount of \$240,900 and a total of 1,100 individuals will be provided SES using Title I funds in the amount of \$1,630,516. It is anticipated that FFY2019 that approximately 300 individuals will receive SES using Title VI funds in the amount of \$240,900 and a total of 1,125 individuals will be provided SES using Title I funds in the amount of \$1,672,625. If federal monies are allocated in a different reduced manner changing the SES funding formulas this will create additional stress on every day budgets. IVRS continues efforts to expand community partnerships and collaborative efforts continue to increase with Iowa's renewed vigor in embracing the philosophy of Employment First.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

IVRS maintains a close working relationship with our secondary schools and Iowa's adult service providers associated with Supported Employment and long-term supports. An MOA was developed with the Department of Education specifying roles and responsibilities for service delivery and funding for secondary school youth. Another MOA between IVRS and the Department of Human Services/Medicaid identifies the necessity of long-term extended supports through Medicaid or by natural supports as required for Supported Employment. Both the IVRS Policy Manual and Menu of Employment Services Manual provide detailed instructions for staff and partners on serving individuals who are under age 25 and require extended services. IVRS added the provision in the Menu of Services Manual for supervisory staff to grant exceptions based on the need of individuals between the ages of 14 - 24 for extended services. This took effect on FFY16 - 17 so data will be compiled going forward. IVRS anticipates this will allow for more rapid placements. An individual under age 25 who requires Supported Employment Services may not be receiving services from a Waiver, or may be on a waiting list for Waiver at the time they become eligible for IVRS. IVRS will continue as part of our DHS MOA to work with the waivers to maximize potential funding, but IVRS could fund up to 8 units (2 hours) per month of Supported Employment Job Coaching services for a period not to exceed four years, or until the individual reaches age 25, or is approved for Waiver services. If additional hours of

coaching were needed beyond the eight hours, it would require an exception. The purpose of this exception is intended to facilitate a youth's transition to work and attainment of natural supports that should occur in the work environment. All of these efforts are designed to help sustain their employment in SES.

B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

The State Unit recognizes that Title VI, Part B funds are only a supplement to the regular Title I funds. By the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year the State Unit typically has exhausted its Title VI, Part B dollars and is spending Title I dollars for supported employment. IVRS is making an effort to collaborate with various government entities including the Department of Human Services Medicaid Waiver program to ensure that adequate funding will be available to pay for supported employment. Efforts to align funding, as well as establish uniform payment systems among state partners continues to be viewed as IVRS priority areas going forward.

The MOA with our Medicaid Provides clearly identifies a priority by IVRS to serve youth with disabilities. The leveraged funding between our state systems has provided flexibility in determining funding streams with IVRS taking a lead role for those under the age of 24. Continued emphasis needs to occur in this area, as Iowa's managed care system has experienced significant change, coupled with a lack of knowledge and understanding across stakeholders. An Employment First Service Guidebook was collaboratively developed to help with providing better information.

o. State's Strategies

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

Below are some of the strategies that have been implemented to improve services at IVRS:

- Supported Project Search programs
- Significant expansion of Occupational Skills Training programs
- Provided trainings to partners on Competitive Integrated Employment and how to better serve our individuals
- Partnering more with workforce on One Stop Center services and the implementation of the Disability Access Committees
- Motivational Interviewing cadre
- Hired a Business Services staff member to better work with employers and train IVRS staff on business development
- Expanded Transition Alliance Programs
- Communication regarding CRP accountability for timely services

- Expanded CRP partnerships to provide more services to the MSD population
- Started summer camps for Transition Students that include bringing in employers to better educate students on employer needs
- Community of Practice webinars for staff and partners to view and learn about Employment First services
- Making the Grade contracts enhancing school to work for transition students
- More involvement with Business Service Reps from Workforce and aligning with them more with business networking
- Reverse Job Fairs
- Connecting to the Sector Boards
- Z-Space
- Collaboration with the School for the Deaf
- Chamber Memberships
- Developed a program for Older Workers
- Hired two Assistive Technology Specialist to serve the state in getting individuals better accommodations and AT needs met.

GOAL 1: All of Iowa's workforce will represent the continuum of a most advanced, diverse, skilled, and Future Ready workers in the nation.

Methods that will be used in the evaluation of progress include but are not limited to customer satisfaction data, quality assurance data, and performance on common performance measures and key standards and indicators, and targeted outcomes and efficiencies. This information will continue to inform IVRS management about service delivery issues, performance patterns, and provide opportunities for improved data analysis.

The implementation of new service delivery strategies with our education partners involve pre-employment transition services as well as services for the potentially eligible. These services have enhanced outreach and influenced service delivery. Our collaborative partnership with Iowa Medicaid has aligned state funding and expanded service delivery. Our continued collaboration with Workforce partners has expanded services to all Iowans with IVRS focused on the supports for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Iowa has received technical assistance support through the Office of Disability and Employment Policy and shared training options with Iowa partners. Iowa was an original pilot project and is now recognized as a leader in the provision of Employment First practices. The continued focus of community provider transformation efforts, the Community of Practice Webinars and continued participation with Subject Matter Experts as identified by ODEP and the Department of Labor all provide opportunities for continued expansion and improved service delivery for individuals with the most significant disabilities in competitive integrated employment.

IVRS has also implemented benefits planning services as part of a "best practices" approach to service delivery. Any Social Security recipient who comes to IVRS for services has staff available to address concerns they may have with benefits. Ongoing training has been provided to staff at IVRS to help ensure this service remains available in every IVRS office.

There is a lack of information about benefits planning services for families through early education and secondary school programming. Continued efforts need to occur in

communicating work incentives, the impact of work, and integrating these discussions into employment planning.

IVRS has a host of direct business services that can be offered to local businesses in conjunction with the activities of the business services efforts in each region. Examples include disability etiquette training, job analysis, ADA accessibility surveys, WEPs (trainee OJTs), employee OJTs, consultation on ergonomics and accommodations, and assistive technology assessments, assistance in obtaining appropriate devices, and training in the use of the devices. Strategies for fostering collaboration that are being developed include: VR availability on-site, Secondary school collaboration, Ticket-to-Work handoffs under Partnership Plus, Business Service teams, Joint staff meetings, Cross trainings, Disability Access Committees, Job Fairs, Reverse Job Fairs, Speaker engagement, Summer work readiness programs, Participation in board meetings, Shared calendars, and Veteran service delivery.

2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.

Part of the Unified State Plan strategy has been to provide workers with the skills, work-based learning opportunities, resources, accommodations and supports needed to secure and maintain, sustain employment so that ALL Iowans work to their fullest potential.

Towards this end, IVRS employs two Assistive Technology Counselor Specialists who work with the local offices in identifying assistive technology that can enhance an individual's ability to live and work. The second position was just filled in the fall of 2015 and reflected the need for additional expansion and capacity in the AT area.

The IVRS Assistive Technology Counselor Specialists are available to consult with staff when job candidates require more intensive assistive technology services. This role also includes an emphasis on developing working relationships that contribute to the referral process for individuals with disabilities to programs or activities. IVRS, in collaboration with stakeholders and members of the State Rehabilitation Council, will review the application of AT services to ensure that IVRS' current policy and Iowa Code language is tailored to best comply with federal law regarding the scope of AT services.

IVRS is able to collaborate with the Easter Seals of Iowa Assistive Technology Program with a specific focus on assistive technology needs of rural job candidates. There is a Joint Statement of Cooperation between Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Program. Primary Assistive Technology expenditures include Computer parts, Glasses, Hearing Aids, Home Modifications, Rehabilitation Technology Devices/Services, and Vehicle Modifications. The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology - Center for Disabilities and Development University of Iowa Health Care and IVRS establishing relationships for providing assistive technology devices and services for Iowans with disabilities. IVRS is also partnering with Easter Seals to improve service delivery and access for Iowa farmers experiencing disability.

3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

IVRS local managers participate on a number of boards in their areas and network with civic organizations and community partners in an attempt to not only identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, but also to identify support systems to enhance and assist the individual in their rehabilitation process. This includes networking opportunities that would typically be available in Chamber of Commerce events.

IVRS has a collaborative working relationship with the Iowa School for the Deaf, which focuses on services for that population. Previous goals were developed because of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and outlined strategies to increase the representation of clients with deafness and hearing loss, as well as Work Group members developing Best Practices for this population to serve as a model for the rest of the state. This continues to be a targeted area.

Additional communication is occurring with VR supervisors on services to individuals who are minorities. The IVRS caseload statistics indicate that minority representation exceeds minority representation in the population. IVRS met the currently identified standards and indicators from RSA including the service ratio for individuals with disabilities who are minorities. This will continue to be a focus of service efforts. Opportunities will be developed to identify strategies for minority groups in high school through service delivery to Potentially Eligible and students under Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Some offices are providing outreach to refugee agencies and groups within their local area. In other offices, there are action groups comprised of core partners (county teams in others) that provide presentations about various services available within that county. Area offices will be asked during the next two years to identify opportunities to bring in speakers or resources to expand staff's awareness of cultural differences for targeted minority groups in their region. This would occur periodically through scheduled staff meetings to meet local outreach needs.

Feedback was obtained regarding a need to further consider services to our Iowan farmers with disabilities or those job candidates seeking agricultural employment. Efforts will be implemented to track those job candidates with agriculture related goals and determine level of need as well as outreach to the USDA, Rural Solutions of Easter Seals of Iowa and the Center for Disabilities and Development to identify training and service gaps for this specific population.

IVRS is excited to begin the planning and implementation of strategies during the next two years in partnership with the Omaha Indian Tribe Nebraska. This has been an underserved population and we now have an agreement outlining collaborative ways to collaborate with Native Americans from the Omaha Tribe who have disabilities. The Omaha Tribe of Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation Project (Omaha Tribe VR) is the recipient of the federal Section 121 Grant under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, of 1973 as amended. The Omaha Tribe, IVRS and the Iowa Department for the Blind have a responsibility to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities within the State of Iowa to assist such individuals to become economically self-sufficient (or more self-sufficient) by assisting consumers obtain meaningful and gainful work.

The purposes of our joint efforts are to:

- a) Coordinate VR programming for eligible American Indians with disabilities residing within, or near, the Iowa boundaries of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska and Iowa reservation;
- b) Provide and coordinate technical assistance in areas of mutual interest;

c) Provide and coordinate training opportunities between IVRS, IDB and the Omaha Tribe VR staff;

d) Provide and coordinate reciprocal training to IVRS and IDB from Omaha Tribe when cultural sensitivity training is available.

4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

GOAL 2: ALL Iowa youth will be afforded the best educational and career opportunities in the nation.

As IVRS develops and implements the continuum of services model, gaps and weaknesses within the system are identified. Together with the Department of Education and through the local planning efforts, educators and rehabilitation professionals will more effectively connect students with opportunities after high school. Infusing employer led job-driven, models into a continuum of services; and expanding upon programs and services that produced outcomes in the past, IVRS and partners are achieving results for students and youth in transition. The following summarizes the coordination of services for students in transition:

- Development of trainings for parents, educators, and rehabilitation professionals on effective practices
- Development of local and state plans to maximize resources and minimize duplication
- Coordination of services within WIOA partnerships to expand opportunities for students/youth with disabilities
- Expansion of third party cooperative agreements to create a seamless system of services and supports
- Development of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key community partnerships to infuse opportunities within existing structure and reduce/eliminate duplication

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

This remains a priority of the State Rehabilitation Council, and has been the driving force behind Iowa Employment First. Improvements have occurred because of changing the IVRS Menu of Service Manual based on feedback from community surveys.

IVRS has established a commitment to continuing partnerships with the Iowa Association of Community Providers member network and spoken at several of their meetings. IVRS has also revisited collaborative efforts with the Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid System.

IVRS continues to offer joint training to CRP partners to keep staff updated in best practice approaches in service delivery. Seen below are the following topics that are - or have been offered - through IVRS Community of Practice opportunities:

- Success Stories in Utilizing an Integrated Resource Team
 - Utilizing the Positive Personal Profile to Capture & Showcase Information Learned in Discovery
 - Successful Transition Practices & Partnering with Schools
 - Business Engagement Strategies to Support Successful Employment Outcomes
 - Iowa's Success Stories
 - The Role of Person-Centered Planning in Achieving Integrated Employment Outcomes
 - Discovery and Customized Employment
 - WIOA & Section 511
 - Engaging & Utilizing Workforce to Support Successful Employment Outcomes
 - Translating Information Learned in Discovery into Successful Employment
-
- Benefits Planning: The Role in Employment & Iowa Resources

6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

Unified Plan Strategy: Implement an accessible data collection effort that streamlines data collection processes, increases efficiency throughout the workforce delivery system, and aids in accurate performance measurement used in decision—making.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) requires core agencies to develop an integrated system that can be used as a common application for services across the workforce delivery system as well as a tool for common data reporting. Although these new reporting requirements significantly expand the amount of data collection required by the agency, they also provide an opportunity for Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to identify ways to collaborate and provide a seamless system to Iowa citizens. The goal is to allow anyone to access information about services available through the core programs, and be able to begin the application process from any electronic device connected to the internet. IVRS technology staff continue to assess our current data system and analyze its effectiveness in data collection, case management and reporting.

Changes to the RSA-911 due to WIOA, as well as proposed data collection and retention for common performance accountability requirements have dominated internal case management system development over the past months and require much collaboration with IT staff in the other core programs. Significant changes in reporting requirements include:

- Reporting quarterly on open and closed cases rather than annually on closed cases
- Collection of data related Pre-Employment Transition Services for potentially eligible students
- Compilation of financial data to assure Title I and Title IV expenditures meet the provisions of WIOA
- Data collection and reporting after the date of exit

- Development of a common application for all core WIOA programs including upload and download of common data
- Determination of what data can be collected from other core WIOA programs through a common data dashboard and data elements that need to be added to IRSS or maintained outside of IRSS and imported through batch processes

Another initiative underway to minimize the burden of data collection across core agencies includes development of an integrated system among the core programs. Members of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation IRSS Project Management Team and Information Technology Department have met with representatives in similar positions in other core programs to begin discussions on a common data collection and common application system. Discussions centered on common data already collected in the current systems as well as the development of structures to move toward a common system.

IVRS was the first VR program in the country to submit their fall 911 report. Efforts are continuing to revamp the internal processing system to gather the required future information and remain at the forefront for transparent service delivery. Continued communication is occurring with core partner agencies in efforts to integrate shared data to the extent the systems will allow.

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

GOAL 3: Iowa will improve the structure, accessibility and administration of workforce delivery systems across the state.

IVRS and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act core partners have continued to build towards a shared vision for an integrated, job-driven workforce system that meets the needs of both business and job seekers. Legislation no longer segregates disability and as such, all organizations are working toward full and comprehensive inclusion in the provision of services to persons with disabilities. Instead of recruiting individuals early just because they “have a disability,” VR staff assist organizations and businesses on how to meet their legal responsibilities by providing expertise to them in a manner that actually achieves a seamless system of service.

Throughout the State of Iowa IVRS is co-located with IWD in most locations. The management of both IWD and IVRS work collaboratively on creating a solid partnership that will advance the vision of the integration model described above. Integration in the One Stop programmatically allows individuals with disabilities to access all programs, workshops, and services with IWD staff.

The work of the state workforce board and the regional disability access committees are key resources and a strategy for implementation to positively impact all partners at the One Stop Center as we work together to prepare a Future Ready Iowa workforce that is inclusive of all Iowans.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

Service delivery efforts are based upon guidance from the State Rehabilitation Council, the IVRS State and Strategic Plans, feedback from Iowa business through the Employer Disability Resource network, and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Innovative strategies are consistently being addressed by the IVRS to minimize duplication, expand service delivery options, increase capacity, while reducing costs. To achieve results, the IVRS team has opportunities to exercise innovation and creativity in the delivery of rehabilitation services.

IVRS has continued overseeing Iowa's Employment First efforts. This initiative has a clear focus on helping individuals with the most significant barriers achieve competitive integrated employment at an optimum level that meets their needs and interests. The Iowa Development Disabilities Council, the Disability Rights of Iowa, the Iowa Association of Community Providers, the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment along with the IVRS State Rehabilitation Council are key partners focused on equitable access and participation. IVRS efforts are closely linked to service delivery strategies with the Iowa Department of Human Services.

IVRS communicated the strategies in working with various populations, partnerships, job candidates, businesses, and staff to create equitable access to individuals with disabilities. The initiatives identified in the State Plan and the work of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau focus on achieving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Throughout this document, all strategies currently employed and new strategies being developed focus on and achieve goals and priorities established by the CSNA and the Unified State Plan.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for individuals with Disabilities, which was tasked to review ways to increase employment for individuals with disabilities, IVRS has prioritized service areas relating to expansion of early work experiences, establishing high expectations, and a focus on business driven demand needs. Communication is continuing in coordination efforts within waiver programs to increase effectiveness.

IVRS will review emerging practices and identify ways to integrate recommended practices and strategies into service delivery. IVRS has utilized expanded practices in implementing the Employment First effort, in expanding contract use as well as in supporting partnership with the Independent Living Centers in expanding support and resources for individuals with the most significant disabilities in supported employment.

C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

IVRS maintains a collaborative working relationship with the Iowa Client Assistance Program and Disability Rights Iowa for working through identified barriers for access and participation in needed programming for individuals with disabilities.

The identified barriers related to equity of access for persons with disabilities stems from various systemic issues such as: historically a person with a disability has been told to go to VR by the workforce partners for employment related services rather than striving to achieve accessibility within those systems. Under WIOA planning, IVRS provides consultation, technical expertise,

and technology assistance to design and implement an accessible workforce system; only providing direct service delivery when because of disability; additional employment services and supports are required. This has required system-wide training to improve understanding that disability is part of the natural human experience.

Implementation of Section 511 of WIOA involves continued education and coordination with both education and community rehabilitation partners. Efforts are occurring across systems to inform local education agencies and Area Education Agency staff on Section 511 and understand with the proper supports, encouragement and services, students with the most significant disabilities can be employed at their optimal level in competitive integrated settings. Ongoing training remains available to provide subminimum wage earners in Iowa career counseling and information and referral services as required under Section 511.

Internally, IVRS staff experienced a learning curve in implementing the provisions of WIOA. The intensive service model requires that systems distinguish individuals who require intensive VR services and understand the Employment First philosophy. Staff need to determine the right strategies and supports for all individuals who want to work. Efforts to refine their skills are continuing to be addressed with assistance from Subject Matter Experts, innovative pilot practices and ongoing training. In 2017, IVRS hired a Training Resource Manager who is creating a professional development training series for all staff. There are individual tracks for different job classifications that allow for further drilling into expertise areas.

p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

IVRS is a collaborative partner in the development of the Iowa Unified Plan and provide staff support to work groups in moving towards common definitions and measures for meeting the achievement of agreed-upon goals. IVRS is using our data metrics system for analysis as well as measuring the success of a number of innovative projects that have been underway, some of which include:

- Regional Board Career Pathway/Sector Board strategies
- Pre-ETS and the Potentially Eligible student population
- Employment Services Contract with Iowa Department of Aging
- Medicaid aligned funding agreement
- Making the Grade contracts
- Assistive Technology Specialist expansion
- Intermediary Network contracts

With regard to technology, IVRS has invested in efforts to expand the effectiveness of work staff and increase capacity for service delivery. This has included use of remote technology such as

iPhones, video technology, laptops, tablets and iPads. It also included the use of Dragon Naturally Speaking software, which provides opportunities to allocate staff positions from a central typing pool to field offices where they have an opportunity to provide increased clerical and office support. These strategies have been implemented to continue with service delivery improvement in light of IVRS' inability to replace exiting staff unless approved by the Iowa Department of Management. We are investigating further ways to utilize electronic signatures as we gradually transition to a less paper intensified system.

Employment First opportunities are continuing to draw attention to Iowa and facilitate changes in our systems. Iowa's efforts have been enhanced through the collaboration occurring between a variety of systems and entities that serve individuals with disabilities. Close communication is provided by IVRS to agencies under contract with IVRS in the provision of Supported Employment Services (SES).

Community Provider organizations participated in initial SES pilots that involve new service delivery options such as Discovery and Customized Employment. IVRS initially had a focus on provider transformation, but this past year has moved towards capacity building. The EF philosophy helped to provide a framework to build upon and establish a common purpose to unite forces in Iowa. For the past three fiscal years, IVRS realized an increase in the number of individuals served through supported employment services. As a result, this increase produced a higher number of job candidates served through the Employment First initiative and through the formal supported employment services.

As discussed earlier in this document, IVRS added an after-school work program, "Making the Grade", which is a work readiness/work experience program that provides services to students with disabilities who are juniors and seniors to obtain and maintain summer and after-school paid work opportunities. Students referred to the program are those who need assistance in getting paid work experience, which may not be available to them due to their disability. This collaborative agreement began in the summer of 2015 with varying results, however is indicative of the types of strategies that IVRS employs to impact student outcomes.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Communication across all systems and stakeholders, variance in federal rule regulations, expectations of constituents and stakeholder groups that are sometimes competing goals, staff capacity, training, and financial resources all impact effective, quality service implementation. As an agency, IVRS has a strategic plan that is coordinated with our state plan, and integrated into Iowa's Unified Plan. Communication and collaborative engagement with partners has enhanced service delivery and expanded options for people with disabilities, although remains on ongoing need. We also continue to prioritize the use of technology in various modes in efforts to develop effective case management strategies and improve access to services. Common data collection systems focused on program goals and measures take time and take resources away from service delivery.

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Outcomes for Supported Employment services are analyzed by IVRS annually. Expenditures on this service is tracked, along with recidivism rates, and closure information including hours worked and rates of pay. Alignment with Medicaid waiver funding occurred and system consistency has been enhanced. There has been a need for IVRS to provide ongoing training to address program changes and resolve issues created with Iowa's new system of Managed Care. Implementation of new payment points and the development of Customized Employment and Supported Short-Term Paid Work Experience services have expanded employment options to individuals and students who are Most Significantly Disabled. Competitive integrated employment remains the ultimate goal for individuals accessing IVRS.

Supported Employment Service outcomes have continued to increase over the last three years, reflecting 382 successful outcomes in 2016 and 406 in 2017. As seen in the chart below, each progressive year, IVRS has demonstrated improvement.

Supported Employment Closures by FFY

ffy	SES 26-0 closures	SES 28-0 closures	SES Rehab Rate	Total 26-0 closures	Total 28-0 closures	Rehab rate Total	SES Hourly Wag Avg	SES Avg Hours worked per week	Avg hourly wage	Avg hours worked per week	received SES
17	406	82	83.20%	2080	2354	46.91%	\$8.83	16	\$12.06	30	592
16	382	103	78.76	2224	2003	52.61	\$8.60	17	\$12.00	31	590
15	333	58	85.17	2321	1726	57.35	\$8.39	19	\$11.61	32	677
14	252	46	84.56	2205	1491	59.66	\$8.12	20	\$11.74	32	430
13	150	33	81.97	2185	1324	62.27	\$7.85	18	\$11.41	33	259
12	148	30	83.15	2162	1235	63.64	\$7.79	19	\$11.50	33	293

Vendor data is shared annually in a Report Out provided by IVRS to internal staff and Community Rehabilitation Program staff (CRPs). The intent of this Report Out is to stimulate conversations with partners, ensure consistent business practices, promote transparency for purchased services, and provide a statewide basis for comparisons. Report Out data is provided to Iowa CRPs that shows:

- The number of IVRS job candidates who received services;
- The dollar amount of services IVRS purchased from CRPs;
- The number of successful employment outcomes obtained from the individuals provided a service;
- The number of case closures not resulting in an employment outcome from the individuals provided a service;
- The average hours worked;

- The average hourly rate earned from the successful employment outcomes;
- The financial costs of services for cases closed;
- An average cost per successful employment outcome; and
- Recidivism rates for job candidates who return to IVRS for services.

Report Out information also compares state averages from all community partners, along with the SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) category related to the successful employment outcomes. Report Out conversations are encouraged between IVRS staff and partners to solicit ideas and perceptions that can help influence service delivery and contribute to improved outcomes for employment success at the local regional level.

The Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment is a current initiative that brings together a diverse set of stakeholders representing all levels of service and interest in employment options for Iowans with disabilities. ICIE is the result of a five-year grant awarded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. ICIE includes a base consortium of representatives from the Development Disabilities Council, the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Disability Rights Iowa, the Iowa Department of Human Rights, and the Department of Human Services to improve systems so that Iowa youth with disabilities have fully integrated and competitive work opportunities. The overall goal of ICIE has been to improve systems so that individuals with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, have fully integrated, competitive work, regardless of where they live in the state. ICIE has been a key collaborator with innovative braiding of funding to expand financial and technical assistance areas specifically related to Employment First and the delivery of supported employment services in Iowa.

The Disability and Employment Initiative through IWD/DOL has also been a key collaborator and partner in increasing employment outcomes. The DEI project has enhanced communication and awareness through their local projects with an Integrated Resource Team, financial literacy strategies and benefits planning.

The Rehabilitation Services Bureau (RSB) is continuing work with the Department of Education to educate parents, teachers, Department of Education Administrators and others on Section 511. RSB is working on webinars and other materials for staff and educators to focus on competitive integrated employment so they are prepared for provisions of Section 511.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Factors impeding achievement of goals include staff turnover issues experienced by a variety of Community Rehabilitation Programs; adjustment to a system of Managed Care which began in Iowa in 2016; difficulties in establishing or maintaining ongoing and/or long-term supports; secondary school transition programming that does not always support competitive integrated employment; expectations of family, students, and service providers; financial disincentives for employment; transportation access; lack of wrap-around supports to meet all needs of job candidates; and capacity of staff to serve all who need services.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

The following information was shared by IVRS at the March 14th, 2017 State Rehabilitation Council members to explain WIOA Performance Measures:

Primary Indicators of Performance:

1. The primary performance indicators include:

a. Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit: the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

b. Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit: the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

c. Median Earnings in the 2nd Quarter after Exit: the median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. Median is the number that is in the middle of a series of numbers and is not the same as the mean or the average of all numbers in the data set.

d. Credential Attainment Rate: a credential is a secondary school diploma or the equivalent, a recognized post-secondary credential, an industry recognized certificate/certification, an apprenticeship, a State or Federal-recognized licensure, or an associate, baccalaureate, or post-graduate degree. A credential does not include work readiness certificates, workforce development board certificates, or health/safety certificates.

i. The credential indicator is the percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attended a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent. The credential must be obtained during participation in or within one year after exit.

ii. Those individuals included are participants who exit a post-secondary program or those in secondary education without a secondary diploma or equivalent. To be included in the calculations for determining levels of performance with respect to the credential attainment indicator, the participant must be employed or enrolled in a program leading to a post-secondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

iii. Only one credential is counted toward the performance measure in each period of participation.

e. Measurable Skill Gains: the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skills gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Included in the indicator are VR participants with education or a training program that leads to a recognized secondary or post-secondary credential on the individual's IPE. Depending on the type of educational or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

i. Documented achievement of at least one education functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level.

1. Comparison of the participant's initial educational functioning level, as measured by a pre-test, with the participant's educational functioning level, as measured by a post-test;

2. Credits or Carnegie Units awarded by an adult high school program that leads to a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

3. Exit from a basic education program and enrollment in post- secondary education and training during the same program year.

ii. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

iii. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards.

1. For secondary education, this gain may be documented through receipt of a secondary transcript or report card for one semester showing that the participant is achieving the State unit's policies for academic standards.

2. For postsecondary education, this gain must demonstrate a sufficient number of credit hours—which is at least 12 hours per semester or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 hours over the course of two completed consecutive semesters during the program year—that shows a participant is achieving the State unit's academic standards (or the equivalent for other than credit hour programs).

iv. Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year on an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training; or

v. Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupation skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks such as knowledge-based exams.

f. Effectiveness in Serving Employers: includes two ways of measuring the level of performance. There is a shared outcome across all six core program for the State of Iowa. The two measures include:

i. Retention with the same employer - the percentage of participants who exit and are employed with the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit. Wage records are used to identify whether a participant is employed with the same employer. When wage records are not included (i.e. Self-employed individuals) or when the participant has not provided a social security number, supplemental wage data may be used.

ii. Employer Penetration Rate - the percentage of employers using services out of all employers in the state. Services are not necessarily on behalf of or for a participant. All services to a business or employees of a business are counted. Services are recorded in the Business Services Web Application located at:

<http://laborsurvey2.iowaworkforce.org/Checkbox/WIOA-BusinessServices-Entry.aspx>.

Performance Indicators:	RSA Standard	FFY2016	FFY2017 (09/30/17)
1.1 Change in number from prior year	Equal or exceed last year	-97	-144
1.2 Percentage of persons after receiving services with employment outcomes	55.8%	52.6%	46.9%
1.3 Percentage of persons with employment outcomes with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage	72.60%	99.55%	100%
1.4 Percent of competitive employment outcomes that were individuals with significant disabilities	62.4%	98.9%	99.7%
1.5 VR average wage as a ratio to the state's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the state who are employed	.52	.58	.56
1.6 The difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services	53%	60.61%	60.82%
2.1 The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds	80%	90.9%	92.1%

Performance accountability continue to be addressed by capturing data specific to program services, as well as review of previously discussed strategic plan objectives. Six performance measures are currently being assessed by core partners. These include:

Second & fourth quarter wages

IVRS is working towards collecting the wages from our workforce center and be able to start reporting available post-exit wages for PY2017 as of March 31, 2018.

Median earnings

IVRS is working towards collecting the wages from our workforce center and be able to start reporting available post-exit wages for PY2017 as of March 31, 2018.

Credential attainment,

IVRS has started collecting credential attainment and reporting available for PY2017.

Measurable skill gains

IVRS has started collecting measurable skill gain and reporting available for PY2017.

Services to business,

IVRS has started collecting the data with our workforce center and be able to start reporting PY2017.

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

On the annual RSA-2 IVRS reports the following expenditures as Innovation and Expansion Activity Costs:

- State Rehab Council
- Project Search Cooperative Agreement
- TAP Cooperative Agreement
- Department on Aging Cooperative Agreement
- Making the Grade Contracts
- Intermediary Network Contracts

These items include contracts with local school districts to fund Transition Alliance Projects; a Cooperative Agreement with the Iowa Department of Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging, the Making the Grade pilot projects and the Iowa School for the Deaf contract are other examples. Examples of I & E activities included funding for the travel and contractor costs for State Rehabilitation Council members to assist with the statewide needs assessment.

Regarding funding support of the Unified State Plan, IVRS continues to support the infrastructure of the One Stop Centers where IVRS is co-located. In all One Stops, IVRS is working toward providing IVRS staff assistance in the delivery of workshops so that individuals with disabilities who require specialized services and supports due to the disability will have an IVRS staff person involved in their instruction. This involvement, an in-kind expense, may include accommodations as well as IVRS staff providing more one-on-one instructional services. Regardless of the need, the goal is to achieve accessibility for the individual with a disability. IVRS will support the One Stop Centers according to the percentage requirements outlined in WIOA each year.

IVRS has the intent to be an active partner and leader in employment services for individuals with disabilities and is excited regarding the work occurring across our state systems to align employment services to maximize state resources for the benefits of our job candidates. We are collaborative partners closely aligned in 12 of our regions and are progressing with One Stop alignment in the remaining three regions. In our current arrangement, we are already providing considerable staff time and capacity in aligning service efforts. This includes representation on various work groups, business service teams, Disability Access Committees and service for our common customers. Beyond that, we are paying \$415,489.43 currently to support co-location efforts at our One Stop Centers. These dollars are used to pay for related rent and infrastructure costs for common space that provide opportunities for IVRS to collaborate with One Stop Center programs and services. This is well above the WIOA allotted percentage for sharing of infrastructure costs, which would be \$191,169.38. This is not attempting to calculate staff time and resources used in actual shared service delivery. These efforts provide an opportunity to enhance the service delivery system because of the collaboration and shared partnering that is occurring.

q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

As previously discussed under sections f. and p. (Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment and Evaluation and Reports of Progress), IVRS continues to increase referral numbers and purchase services and supports from community rehabilitation providers. Data reflects an expanded array of services are being provided with an increase in numbers of job candidates being served.

Quality benchmarks such as length of time in service and outcome measures are being collected through the CRP Annual Report, which is provided by IVRS to all partners. This information also influences informed choice options as job candidates make decisions on which providers they want to work with. IVRS involvement with Employment First efforts and the leveraged resources working with the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment and the Disability Employment Initiative enhanced the scope and outreach of program efforts. Significant changes have occurred with the alignment of funding and the Menu of Services that have expanded to reflect the services needed for enhanced customized and supported employment services.

We are struggling with how to integrate SES programming into a quality assurance program that assess quality beyond just outcome measures of jobs, hours and wages. We do a customer satisfaction survey with all job candidates, but it is difficult to glean specific information specific to SES. We have received significant feedback from the community regarding the need for training in the area of Customized Employment and Discovery and this has been an emphasis during the past three years. We have outreached to WINTAC for further consultation on quality measurements and programs as it pertains to our SES programming and will further this conversation for this plan.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

This is outlined in the MOA with our Medicaid partners and is specified at the time of agreement with the Individual Plan for Employment. Training has occurred with community rehabilitation providers, VR staff and case managers in efforts to have a smooth, seamless system. Work still needs to occur with all staff across systems to ensure gaps in extended services are eliminated since Iowa's system of Managed Care has influenced long-term services in some cases. IVRS has revised forms to complement the current system of handing off job candidates from VR's short-term service system to the Waiver's longer-term system of supports. IVRS will continue to provide opportunities for communication and identification of system change that is needed to improve the timing of extended service delivery.

Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Iowa Department of Education**

Name of designated State agency **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David L. Mitchell**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Administrator**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

Footnotes

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of

Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David Mitchell**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Administrator**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a

Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David Mitchell**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Administrator**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.

d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).

e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **Yes**

f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **Yes**

g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **Yes**

h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.

j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.

k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.

m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above **Yes**

d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the

Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,

i. has developed and will implement,

A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and

B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and

ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:

a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are

used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that:

- A. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act**
- ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State

3f) Consistent with WIOA plan for infrastructure costs per 34 CFR section 361.760

4c) Agency will provide the full range of services described above for eligible individuals with disabilities and will remain compliant to our Order of Selection criteria as outlined in the State Plan.

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of

consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

The Iowa Department for the Blind is an independent consumer—controlled commission; there is no State Rehabilitation Council.

2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

Not applicable.

3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

Not applicable.

b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

The Iowa Department for the Blind is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

Not applicable.

3. All State plan requirements will apply

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not applicable.

c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

Current Cooperative Agreements: The Iowa Department for the Blind cooperates with numerous regional and community agencies and organizations that are not required partners of the statewide Workforce Investment system. Many of these regional and community agencies have entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Workforce Investment partners,

including the Department. Cooperative activities include providing and receiving training regarding eligibility and services; making and receiving referrals and providing follow—up; and sharing applicable information regarding mutual clients.

Governance Group. The Iowa Department for the Blind is a signatory of the Governance Group Memorandum of Agreement. The Governance Group, organized in 1998, includes administrative personnel from the Iowa’s Developmental Disability Council, the Office of Persons with Disabilities — Department of Human Rights, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services, Workforce Development, Department of Education, Department on Aging and the Department for the Blind. The purpose of the Governance Group is to ensure that partner agencies deliver quality employment services to individuals with disabilities by addressing the barriers to collaborative efforts that their varying policies and procedures can create. Through projects sponsored by this group, Department staff have worked collaboratively with staff from the Veteran’s Administration, Iowa’s Medicaid Buy—in program known as the Medicaid for Employed Persons with Disabilities Program, Iowa’s Economic Development Authority, and Social Security’s Work Incentives Planning and Assistance grant program.

Institutions of Higher Education. The Department continues the memoranda of understanding (MOU) with Board of Regents institutions of higher education and in the State. This MOU provides for the coordination of services for clients of the Department who are students at one of the universities. It addresses the responsibilities of each party under the laws that address services for each. It states that the Board of Regents Universities is responsible for the provision of reasonable accommodations that allow access to the classroom and university programs, and that the Department is responsible for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. The agreement addresses financial responsibilities of the parties and dispute resolution methods. The Department has similar agreements with community colleges within the state.

In addition, the Department works with a number of entities and programs throughout the state that are not carrying out activities through the state workforce development system, however a formal cooperative agreement has not been developed. IDB participates in the following efforts:

Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE). The Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE) is an initiative to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders that represent all levels of service and interest. The goal of the Coalition is to improve existing state systems so that Iowa youth with disabilities have increased opportunities and resources for fully integrated, competitive employment, regardless of where they live in the state. The Department’s Vocational Rehabilitation Program supervisor represents the Department on the Coalition. This effort is funded by a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

NFB—NEWSLINE. The Department contracts with the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa to make more than 330 local and national newspapers (including the Des Moines Register) available to Iowans through a telephone—based interface with a computerized system. This project provides ready access to local and national job listings, magazines, TV listings, and information from government agencies and organizations of and for the blind.

Iowa Radio Reading Information Service for the Blind and Print Handicapped (IRIS). The Department partners with IRIS to assist Iowans who cannot access print information. This service allows access to a number of resources including information about career topics,

employment opportunities and training events available from newspapers, magazines, and other sources by radio.

National Library Service. The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has a cooperative agreement to serve as a regional library from the National Library Service. The service allows access to print and book materials not available to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired through their local, school, or college libraries.

Interlibrary Loan Programs. The library has cooperative agreement with the State Library of Iowa and Iowa libraries to participate in the statewide Interlibrary Loan program, borrowing and lending books. The library also maintains cooperative agreements with libraries and Instructional Materials Centers around the country to participate in an Interlibrary Loan program, borrowing and lending books.

The Employer's Disability Resource Network (EDRN). This employer development team is a collaborative group of state, federal and local partners who are working together to identify, develop and mobilize resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring persons with disabilities. The EDRN seeks to increase employment of persons with disabilities by pooling agency resources and providing technical expertise to employers throughout the state. Members of this group include staff from the Department, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Economic Development Authority, U.S. Small Business Administration, Department of Human Rights — Office of Persons with Disabilities and Office of Deaf Services, Iowa Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Easter Seals of Iowa, Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa, Department of Education and the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant program. Members of this group have presented and provided resources and assistance to employers and employer organizations throughout the state. In addition, the EDRN provides Iowa employers with access to qualified job applicants and are available to provide employers with information and support related to retaining quality employees who experience a disability.

Ticket to Work. The Department participates in the Ticket to Work program and utilizes the reimbursement process for recipients of Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance who are vocational rehabilitation clients seeking employment.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

IDB is working toward developing a cooperative agreement with state programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology is funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living. IPAT, the statewide assistive technology program for Iowans, is a program of the Center for Disabilities and Development at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. The Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center receives funding through a grant from the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology, based out of the University of Iowa. This program also has provided information, referral, and assistive technology for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowan's who are blind or visually impaired.

The Iowa Department for the Blind maintains a team of rehabilitation technology specialists who are trained in blindness and low vision assistive technology and provide training, assessment,

and purchasing recommendations. The IDB also has a team of vocational rehabilitation teachers who provide training in the use of blindness and low vision rehabilitation technology as well as other types of disability related skills training to vocational rehabilitation clients across the state. In addition, IDB has independent living rehabilitation teachers who are also trained in assistive technology to assist individuals to meet their independent living needs. IDB partners to provide trainings and events about assistive technology to Iowans who are blind and low vision and to trainers of assistive technology devices. The IDB also partners with IVRS to ensure clients being served have access to information and training on assistive technology.

Currently the IDB is finalizing a formal cooperative agreement with these programs. IDB will continue to refer individuals to the IPAT program and to the Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center when services needed are outside of the scope of services IDB can provide. IDB will also continue to partner with Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center to provide devices for youth with disabilities to try when participating in IDB programs. IDB will continue to partner with these programs to provide assistive technology services to clients.

3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

The Iowa Department for the Blind does not have a cooperative agreement with the USDA Rural Development office in Iowa which administers business-cooperative, housing, and community programs. These programs provide grants, loans, and technical assistance to rural residents and businesses targeting rural communities. These programs are aimed at creating or preserving jobs; promoting a clean rural environment; improving access to decent housing and community facilities; and ensuring essential community facilities are available to rural residents, such as health care clinics, fire and rescue facilities, and more. As part of their technical assistance efforts, the Iowa Rural Development office provides information to disabled Iowans. While a formal agreement has not been developed, the Department will provide technical assistance to the Rural Development staff in Iowa as necessary.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

The Iowa Department for the Blind is working with our Regional Workforce Development Boards and the Iowa Workforce Development Board in the provision of services to out-of-school youth. The IDB refers individuals to Iowa Workforce Development for information regarding benefits planning, labor market information, assessment information, in addition to trainings, assistance with job search activities and a variety of other services available through the local one-stop centers. IDB is working with each region to provide information, training, and technical assistance to our one-stop partners to become accessible to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. IDB will continue to partner with each local one-stop to ensure out-of-school youth who are blind and visually impaired are able to access their services. The IDB is participating in the development and implementation of local and state level agreements with our workforce partners who are serving out-of-school youth.

5. State use contracting programs.

The Iowa Department for the Blind does not have cooperative agreements with the State Use contracting programs. While IDB is exempt from the state of Iowa purchasing guidelines, IDB

does follow the Iowa Department of Administrative Services rules for financial bidding and contracting.

d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

1. DSU's plans

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Since 2006, the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Iowa Braille School (Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired — IESBVI), and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) have been working collaboratively under the Statewide System for Vision Services. This system ensures collaboration in service delivery to children and youth who are blind or visually impaired, including students with the most significant disabilities. Through this system, staff can exchange information about their services and approaches in order to create effective working relationships which will enhance educational and transition outcomes. The Iowa Department has had a cooperative agreement in place with the Iowa Department of Education since 2003. This agreement has not expired, but we are currently working with the Department of Education to update the agreement to include current services, to outline roles and responsibilities of each agency, and to further identify how each agency will ensure all students with disabilities receive pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services.

IDB vocational rehabilitation counselors collaborate with educators, parents, and other service providers on an ongoing basis, to assure that students who are blind or visually impaired will receive high quality education and rehabilitation services. The IDB collaborates with individuals and entities statewide to provide services that meet the transition needs of students who are blind, deaf—blind, or visually impaired with and without additional disabilities. IDB connects with the IESBVI administrators; the Iowa Department of Education; the ASK Family Resource Center; the Special Education Advisory Panel; the Deaf—Blind Advisory Committee; teachers of the visually impaired (TVI); orientation and mobility specialists (OMS); educators in local school districts and area education agencies; Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and students and their families or guardians.

The Director of the IDB is a standing member of both the Management Team for Blind Services and Leadership Team for Deaf and Blind Services. These committees were formed to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Iowa Department of Education, Area Education Agencies, IESBVI, IDB, and IVRS. The purpose of the Management Team is to provide direction for the development and implementation of work plans and provides oversight in order to maintain and improve the statewide system of educational services for blind and visually impaired and deaf-blind students. The purpose of the Leadership Team for Deaf and Blind Services is to provide a forum for the Executive and Management Teams to work together to gather information, solve problems, and to provide feedback on work plans, and issues that are of

a common interest as well as support collaboration and build cohesion in the statewide system of services for deaf and hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired, and deaf-blind students.

The IDB vocational rehabilitation program administrator is a member of the State of Iowa's Special Education Advisory Panel and a vocational rehabilitation counselor participates as a member of the Deaf—Blind Advisory Committee which informs Iowa's Deaf—Blind Project. VR counselors and other IDB staff reach out to TVI's and OMS with a focus of building partnerships and collaboration. The VR counselors connect with TVI's and OMS in group settings, present at IESBVI training events, and communicate on an individual basis with educators.

In addition, VR counselors are active team members at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at school districts throughout Iowa. IDB counselors provide information about the IDB so that students and their families understand the vocational rehabilitation process and can make informed choices when applying for vocational rehabilitation services and making decisions about training and career options following high school completion.

VR counselors encourage transition—age youth and their families to apply for services as early as age 14 as established by IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act. Once an application is complete, eligibility must be determined. The counselor assists a student in the development of his/her Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) within 90 days from eligibility determination and prior to exit from High School for VR services. VR counselors coordinate with other members of the IEP team to ensure that students participate in work—based learning experiences and paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Experiences take place in integrated settings in the community; settings that are in segregated environments are discouraged and avoided. Pre-employment transition services are provided by vocational rehabilitation counselors, vocational rehabilitation teachers, employment specialists, and other appropriate staff. In addition, IDB does partner with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, local school districts, and the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired to provide services to students with disabilities. IDB also contracts with community rehabilitation programs for the provision of pre-employment transition services. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors also partner with local workforce providers to provide pre-employment transition services, specifically for work-based learning experiences, job exploration counseling and work-readiness skills.

Ongoing collaboration and communication amongst IDB, IESBVI, local educators, parents, and students are important strengths to the overall transition efforts in Iowa. IDB staff and administrators will continue a process of training educators and service providers about the services the Department provides to students who are blind or visually impaired. The Department coordinates its services with the Iowa Braille School and AEAs to provide seamless transition from school, where all services are provided by the educational agencies (AEAs and local school districts), to vocational rehabilitation. IDB VR counselors participate in Vision Discipline meetings in each AEA region ensuring that both the VR counselor and the TVI serving each school/student are maintaining communication and collaboration in providing services to students.

IDB offers a wide range and expanding menu of assistive technology services to transition age youth and educators of transition age youth. IDB technology specialists provide technology assessments and one—on—one assistive technology training to transition age youth at school or at home. IDB staff attend IEP meetings at the request of the team and consult with special

education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers. IDB and IESBVI are working together to provide information and training to K—12 students and their families at annual Spring Vision Conferences. In addition, each entity is providing the other with training. For example, IDB will provide IESBVI staff with training and information about vocational rehabilitation at their annual Summer Institute as well as their annual Fall Vision Conference. IESBVI is providing IDB with training about the educational processes during a quarterly staff in—service meeting.

IDB counseling staff works with Regional Workforce Investment Boards and Transition Advisory Committees to inform them of the program and to develop work experience and career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities in integrated settings.

Referrals. The commitment to collaboration and partnership resulted in the development of a standard statewide referral procedure. In Iowa, Area Education Agencies (AEAs) coordinate all services for children with disabilities. AEA personnel and local school district personnel participate in developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and in providing the specialized services those students require. Itinerant Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) provide vision—related IEP services to those students who are blind or visually impaired.

TVIs submit completed statewide referral forms for all students, starting as early as age 14 and who are receiving vision—related services. Upon the receipt of a referral form, the IDB referral specialist will follow up with the student and his/her family to gather additional information and will then assign the student to a VR counselor. The counselor will schedule a time to meet with the student and parent(s) or legal guardian to finalize necessary paperwork which is followed by eligibility determination. The next step is to partner with the student to determine his/her goals and develop a plan (IPE — Individual Plan for Employment) identifying the services needed to reach those goals.

The Instructional Materials Center (IMC) within the Library serves students in two principal ways. Its primary function is to provide textbooks and educational materials to students from kindergarten through college. Its secondary function is to help students find resources for research projects. Itinerant vision teachers or other school personnel contact the IMC with requests for books for students in grades K—12. The IMC will produce the materials in—house or secure a vendor to produce the needed material. The IMC can provide recorded textbooks and electronic text files to reading disabled students. These requests can be made by students, parents, teachers, or Area Education Agency personnel. College students or vocational trainees may also request course materials from the IMC. Both students and educational staff have access to the library's collection.

The Library has a contract with the Iowa Department of Education to assist Iowa in meeting the NIMAS (National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards) requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Library provides training to TVIs and other school personnel regarding accessible formats, Braille and use of accessible technology for reading.

Advisory Committee. An IDB VR counselor serves on the Advisory Committee for the Iowa Deafblind Services Project. The committee consists of families, students, consumers, and collaborative partnerships with Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department for the Blind,

Iowa Braille School, Iowa School for the Deaf, Regents Universities, and Deaf Services Commission. The committee was established to meet the needs of deaf—blind children by providing assistance via training efforts and by providing information on research and practices for the purpose of educating deaf/blind individuals from birth through age 21.

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP). The Department's Vocational Rehabilitation program administrator serves on the Special Education Advisory Panel, which discusses outcomes and policies related to students and youth in special education, including students in transition. The purpose of IDB involvement is to connect with schools and providers for transition, provide guidance on policy development and strategies for student outcomes, while also providing information that impacts the most significantly disabled students/youth as it pertains to Section 511 of WIOA.

Expanded Core Curriculum. In 2008, the state legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a core curriculum for educating students in Iowa. The Core Curriculum defines essential concepts and skills that K—12 students should learn. An Expanded Core Curriculum was included in this legislation for students with disabilities. The Expanded Core Curriculum is not an alternative to the Core Curriculum. Instead, the Expanded Core Curriculum identifies additional concepts and skill sets that students with disabilities must be taught in conjunction with the Core Curriculum. These additional areas are accessing assistive technology, career education, compensatory skills, independent living skills, orientation and mobility skills, recreation and leisure skills, self—determination skills, social interaction skills, and visual efficiency skills.

Several of the IDB transition programs are designed to support the student's IEP with regard to the Expanded Core Curriculum. For example, a summer program for transition clients focuses on developing assistive technology proficiency, independent mobility, daily living skills, and soft skills such as appropriate communication and appearance for the workplace. Students who are blind or have low vision also have the opportunity to participate in specialized IDB programs for children and youth. IDB collaborates with educators to develop programs based on the needs of clients.

IDB—Sponsored Programs. The Iowa Department for the Blind LEAP Program is dedicated to providing meaningful and high quality vocational rehabilitation services to blind and low vision students with disabilities from across the state. The Program provides many opportunities for these students to develop the confidence and skills necessary for seamless transitions to life after high school. The focus of LEAP is to motivate and assist students with disabilities to: learn skills for independence and workplace readiness; explore careers and educational opportunities; learn to advocate and take charge of their future, and; prepare for the future through work—based learning experiences in integrated settings.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires IDB and other vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide five Pre—Employment Transition Services. The services include: job exploration counseling, work—based learning and work experiences in competitive integrated employment, counseling on post—secondary educational opportunities, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self—advocacy. Services are provided. The expected outcome of all IDB sponsored programs is employment in integrated competitive employment. The pre—employment transition services were the basis for the development of the IDB LEAP concept.

The Summer LEAP Academy is an eight-week residential program that provides training to blind and low vision high school students (students with disabilities) in independent living skills and specific non—visual techniques in the areas of technology, cane travel, Braille and other communication, home management and industrial arts. There is a focus on self—advocacy and other life skills as well as job readiness and career—related topics. In addition to the classes, students participate in fun and challenging activities to develop positive attitudes about blindness and vision loss and equip them with the confidence to believe in themselves and their abilities.

IDB LEAP Weekend Retreats (Friday evenings through Sunday afternoons) are offered at least five times per school year. Blind and low vision high school students from across Iowa participate in the theme—based retreats and work on building disability—related skills as well as skills in areas such as job readiness, job interviewing, communication, orientation and mobility, technology, team—work, time—management, social behavior, advocacy, peer interaction, problem solving, etc. The retreats also provide a means for students to step out of their comfort zones to increase confidence and positive attitudes about blindness.

The Braille Challenge is an annual event sponsored by the IDB and IESBVI, provides opportunities for students in grades 1 to 12 to test their Braille skills in reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. Top finishers in the various age brackets advance to other competitions. The Challenge brings students and families together from across the state of Iowa where new connections and friends are made every year. The competition inspires many blind and low vision students to work to improve their Braille skills. Program staff take this opportunity to provide outreach and training to parents, students, and support systems about the importance of students developing workplace readiness, self—advocacy and blindness skills.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

The Department has a formal interagency agreement with the Iowa Department of Education (DE). Through this agreement, the DE and the IDB agree to collaborate in providing:

- Consultation and technical assistance to assist local education agencies (LEAs) and area education agencies (AEAs) in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services.
- Support for transition planning provided by LEAs, AEAs, and the IDB for students with disabilities including the development and completion of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDB staff will develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each IDB eligible individual prior to the individual's graduation. The individual, parents, educators and IDB staff will collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and the IPE will be consistent with each other. The individual's preferences, interests and skills will serve as the basis of employment goals.
- Coordination to ensure that transition services are provided by qualified personnel as defined in Iowa Administrative Code 281—41.8(256B,34CFR300), Iowa Administrative Code 111—2.1(216(B), and other relevant state requirements.
- Support for early outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. Outreach efforts will include a description of the purpose

of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. The DE will assist in the dissemination of written materials developed by IDB. Outreach to students who are blind or visually impaired should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process. The Department will continue to review and revise the agreement with the Iowa Department of Education to develop procedures and mechanisms to meet the needs of students who are blind and visually impaired. The Department is working with the Department of Education to update the current agreement to include pre-employment transition services into the agreement; however, while not in the language of the MOA, the services are being provided.

All of the Iowa Department for the Blind's programs for students who are blind or visually impaired, including students who are deaf-blind and those who have the most significant disabilities, continue to be reviewed in efforts to meet the needs of current clients and potentially eligible individuals. Programs are designed so that all youth who want to attend are able to attend, including providing necessary supports to allow equal opportunity and engagement in activities.

The Department has reviewed and is adjusting the service delivery system to allocate 15 percent of the federal allotment for the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities prior to exit from secondary education. The Department is working to develop a mechanism to track the provision, coordination, arrangement and purchase of pre-employment transition services provided by the Iowa Department for the Blind.

B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

VR counselors encourage transition-age youth and their families to apply for services as early as age 14 as established by IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act. Eligibility must be determined 60 days from the date of the application. The counselor assists a student in the development of his/her Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) within 90 days of eligibility determination for VR services and prior to exit from high school. VR counselors coordinate with other members of the IEP team to ensure that students participate in work-based learning experiences and paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Experiences take place in integrated settings in the community; settings that are in segregated environments are discouraged and avoided.

C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

The Iowa Department of Education, hereafter referred to as DE, and the Iowa Department for the Blind, hereafter referred to as IDB, for the purpose of implementing the requirements of 34CFR 361.22(b), enter into the following interagency agreement. The DE and the IDB are designated state lead agencies in executing the provisions of this agreement.

The DE and the IDB agree to collaborate in providing:

Consultation and technical assistance to assist local education agencies (LEAs) and area education agencies (AEAs) in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services.

Support for transition planning provided by LEAs, AEAs, and the IDB for students with disabilities including the development and completion of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDB staff will develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each IDB eligible individual within 90 days from eligibility determination and prior to the individual's graduation from high school. The individual, parents, educators and IDB staff will collaborate so that the goals of the IEP and the IPE will be consistent with each other. The individual's preferences, interests and skills will serve as the basis of employment goals.

Coordination to ensure that transition services are provided by qualified personnel as defined Iowa Administrative Code 281—41.8(256B,34CFR300), Iowa Administrative Code 111—2.1(216(B), and other relevant state requirements.

Support for early outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services. Outreach efforts will include a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to students who are potentially eligible and in need of pre-employment transition services. The DE will assist in the dissemination of written materials developed by IDB. Outreach to students who are blind or visually impaired should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process.

Financial responsibilities. The DE and IDB shall be responsible for the costs they incur in carrying out this agreement. The IDB agrees to provide for the costs of materials describing available IDB programs and services.

Amendment. This agreement may be amended in writing upon mutual consent of the DE and the IDB.

Term of the agreement. This agreement is effective upon execution by the DE and the IDB and shall remain in effect until it is terminated by either party upon written thirty (30) day notice to the other party.

The Iowa Department for the Blind and the Iowa Department of Education are working to revise the current agreement to more fully define the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Provided in Section A.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Department does not have long-term cooperative agreements in place with private non-profit VR service providers. However, the Department has utilized such entities on a case-by-case basis. For instance, BLIND, Inc. in Minneapolis, MN and the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, CO have provided orientation and adjustment training and job search services to our clients. While the Department has its own Orientation Center, the needs of some clients may be better addressed at an alternative center; this decision is based on client informed choice.

Because the number of blind and visually impaired Iowans who utilize services from Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is both small and widely dispersed, the Department collaborates with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to define potential services, outcomes, and costs. By working together, the Department and IVRS ensure that CRPs receive consistent information and direction from the VR agencies in Iowa. IDB works collaboratively with CRPs when the service is necessary for the client to meet their training and employment goals. Agreements entered into with any organization will require that assessment and career development activities occur in integrated work settings in the community. The department does not have formal vendor agreements with all of Iowa's CRPs for vocational rehabilitation services.

The client and VR Counselor may identify a private provider that best addresses his or her specific VR needs. In these instances, and with agreement of services by the provider, counselor and the client, the Counselor issues an authorization for the services. The provider is required to submit periodic reports on progress to the Counselor. The Counselor may continue to authorize for services until the services have been completed, the provider demonstrates progress is not being made, or the client finds that services are not addressing needs. Evidence of these arrangements can be found in individual case files.

IDB partners with the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) to expand training options for clients who are Deaf-Blind and require training beyond the expertise of the program staff at the Iowa Department for the Blind's Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center. IDB provides referral of IDB clients to HKNC for the iCanConnect program or the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, as a similar benefit, for the purpose of providing equipment to eligible individuals to enable access to telephone, advanced communications and information services. IDB also provides referrals to HKNC for the various young adult programs during the summer as well as the traditional program for assessment and training of deaf-blind adults, with the mutual goal of employment.

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Because the number of blind and visually impaired Iowans who utilize services from Community Rehabilitation Programs is both small and widely dispersed, the Department collaborates with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) to define supported employment services, outcomes, and costs. The Department enters into cooperative agreements with providers of supported employment when specific clients are identified as needing those services. When appropriate, supported employment services and extended services are paid for through county services under the Medicaid Waiver programs. By working together, the Department and IVRS ensure that CRPs receive consistent information and direction from the VR agencies in Iowa. IDB does not have vendor agreements in place to provide SE services but are reviewing how we

work and training community rehabilitation providers with an intent to create formalized agreements with appropriate qualified vendors.

The Department may also make arrangements with other private entities to provide supported employment and extended services as the need arises. Other private entities may include employers, family members, and individuals contracted to provide these services. Natural supports and county services are the most often used services for extended support services.

The Department is adjusting the service delivery system to allocate 50 percent of the supported employment grant allotment for SE to youth with the most significant disabilities. In addition, these funds may be used to provide extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years or until the individual turns 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth - whichever comes first.

g. Coordination with Employers

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR services; and

It is IDB's goal to have an expansive number of employer relationships throughout the state of Iowa in order to increase our ability to provide quality career development, job search and job placement services to our clients. Through the successful development and management of employer relationships, IDB is better able to meet the employment needs of our clients. IDB focuses attention on strategic employer development in order to provide services and benefit to both employers and IDB clients. The IDB employs two Employment Specialists whose primary customers are employers within their areas of coverage, as well as, WIOA and community partners. Employment Specialist's key role is to engage employers and cultivate mutually beneficial relationships through strategic employer development. IDB recognizes that high quality relationships will increase effectiveness at assisting clients in reaching their employment goals while at the same time meet the needs of employers. Employment Specialists develop and deliver services that are based upon the various identified needs of businesses including: applicant screening and assessment, job analyses, job accommodations, and on-the-job training plans. In addition, delivering diversity awareness trainings and interpreting and explaining policies, rules, regulations, and laws. In particular, Employment Specialist provide assistance in addressing employers' needs through compliance in meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 503 and other workplace requirements, employer incentives and worksite modifications; these services are specifically designed to support business growth and increase employment opportunity for persons with disabilities, including persons with the most significant disabilities. Employment Specialists and other VR staff are engaged with the WIOA state and local boards, are members of employer groups, and participate in business networking and human resource organizations as available in their area.

The Department Rehabilitation Technology Specialists provide systems evaluation and equipment setup services for organizations such as Nationwide Insurance, Unity Point, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and CenturyLink. We work with clients at the job site and assist during onboarding training sessions. Specialists are able to demonstrate assistive

technology, answer questions related to blindness and assistive technology, and provide resources and information to assist the employer in meeting their business needs.

The library provides services to employers by producing accessible materials needed by employers for staff, new employees, and the public. The library also provides training to community public libraries to assist in serving those within their communities who need accessible materials and information.

Through participation in the Employer's Disability Resource Network (EDRN), Employment Specialists work collaboratively with other state, federal and community partners to identify, develop, and mobilize resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. The EDRN has implemented a bi-annual employer's summit, which is a round-table discussion with business and community partners to discuss successes and challenges related to hiring individuals with disabilities. The businesses and partners who attend decide on the topics and are able to engage in open discussions of the issues and opportunities each of their organizations face in hiring individuals with disabilities.

Employment Specialists connect with employers on a national level through involvement in the National Employment Team (NET). Participation in NET allows Employment Specialists to learn about employment opportunities and career development resources, in addition to addressing employer hiring needs, providing information regarding disability awareness, retention assistance, accommodations, and other support services. Participation in the NET also allows access to the Talent Acquisition Portal which is used by national companies to fulfill their diversity and inclusion efforts. Other disability minded networks of professionals are the Disability Access Committee's and the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). Partnering in both of these groups allows IDB to have presence in a regional and localized manner to discuss and plan for disability related strategies.

Partnering with WIOA business partners along with community based job developers and employment specialists assists the Employment Specialist to have an access to a network of professionals working in the field of employment. The WIOA Business Services team is a mandated partner in which WIOA business partners come together to discuss strategies to work with business and industries in each region. Along with this team and maintaining a relationship with BSR's is imperative to cover a large territory and having access to experts that are locally based. Community based relationships with ECI's, Job Developer's Groups, and other community service providers are also necessary develop and maintain in order to have knowledge of what local businesses and groups are doing on behalf of business and industry. All of these entities widen the network of relationships within the employment field that will lead to higher placement outcomes.

IDB and several partner agencies including Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Workforce Development, community rehabilitation partners and employers have worked together in multiple regions in Iowa to implement Reverse Job Fairs. This type of fair is a unique process that allows the job seeker to receive assistance in creating a strength-based presentation and a format to deliver it directly to employers. The fair is unique in that it is a combination of three events: the first is a workshop in which candidates go through various stations to learn job seeking skills such as presentation, introductions, interviewing, resume and application, in addition to creating a display to showcase their talents; the second is a rehearsal where clients have a chance to practice their presentation with employers and providers; the final day is the

Reverse Job Fair in which clients are able to give their presentation to the employers who are walking among the displays. These events have resulted in successes for clients which include increase in confidence, offers to participate in interviews and job hires.

Employers and hiring staff are invited to tour the Iowa Department for the Blind; having the opportunity to learn about the resources available, understand the capabilities of persons who are blind, and see demonstrations of potential accommodations and techniques a person who is blind may use in an employment setting. The Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center provides prevocational, nonvisual adjustment-to-blindness training to vocational rehabilitation clients. Students participating in this training learn nonvisual techniques, develop a positive attitude about blindness, and build self-confidence. Through tours given by center students, employers see the techniques blind people use for traveling with the long, white cane, taking and reading Braille notes, using computers with speech, cooking, and operating power tools, in addition to being able to ask questions about blindness. Students also participate in a jobs class where they work toward their chosen careers, which can include informational interviewing, job shadowing, submitting applications for employment, determining accommodations for a job and networking with employers in the community.

The BEP works with eligible individuals who are interested in self-employment to manage their own businesses -- operating vending machines, road side vending sites, and/or snack bar/catering services. Entrepreneurs are provided with a considerable amount of training before they manage a business. This is supplemented by ongoing training to promote independent entrepreneurship in all business areas including hiring and managing employees, inventory control, ordering, pricing, scheduling, maintaining and repairing equipment, payroll, and business accounting.

The IDB partners with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) on the Iowa Self Employment program which is available to clients of both agencies. The program assists individuals to explore the option of becoming self-sufficient through the self-employment. Business Development Specialists provide technical assistance to clients to assist them in reaching this goal if determined appropriate. Through the program, clients can access Iowa Economic Development, Iowa Small Business Development Centers, Iowa Job Centers and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and the Iowa Workforce Development to gain additional training or assistance in developing their business plans. The Department encourages and assists clients to develop connections and mentors with other individuals, including individuals who are blind or visually impaired, who have established successful businesses.

2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is dedicated to providing high quality vocational rehabilitation services to blind and visually impaired youth and students with disabilities across the state of Iowa. Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, are necessary to the successful employment of students and youth who are blind. IDB emphasizes the need for students and youth who are blind to build and strengthen skills in alternative techniques, assistive technology, disability related skills training, work readiness skills, and self-advocacy skills. The IDB strongly believes that quality training and increasing independence and confidence, is essential to the success of transition aged youth in post-secondary environments. The Department begins working with students at the age of 14 to provide necessary services. An

essential goal is for all transition students to have paid work experience in competitive integrated employment prior to graduating high school. In an effort to meet this goal, IDB works with employers to align job training programs and work-based learning experiences, in addition to assisting with necessary accommodations. Employment Specialists focus on developing relationships with employers for the purpose of creating work experience opportunities, including on-the-job trainings, internships, and paid work experiences. These relationships are also beneficial in providing employers with an understanding and experience of hiring individuals who are blind.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities by facilitating opportunities for job shadowing, work experience, work assessment and on-the-job training. The BEP also assists to provide transition services to youth with disabilities as required and appropriate.

h. Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

The Iowa Department for the Blind is dedicated to assisting clients to achieve competitive integrated employment. The Department will continue to explore potential for cooperation and collaboration with the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act. The Department collaborates to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals with developmental disabilities in the System who are described as blind and visually impaired. Other mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with those providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served. A Memorandum of Agreement with the Governance Group (eight state agencies which includes the State Medicaid/Mental Health Division and the Executive Director of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council) collaborated to support strategies to reduce duplication and maximize employment efforts with a clear focus on competitive, community integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The Department of Human Services (DHS) that administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU describes the financial responsibilities and the populations that are served to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

The goal of the Governance Group is to strengthen employment services for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowans with the most significant disabilities. To accomplish this goal, collaboration and coordination of career and employment services must occur among the partners and among their local offices in support of community-based integrated employment. The following are the strategies the IDB and other partners are implementing to meet the goal. The IDB works with other Operations Team members to identify and assess barriers to collaboration at all levels of service delivery. The IDB maintains communication among state and local offices to solicit state-level and local input on collaboration issues. The partners continue to solicit information and recommendations from local offices and from Partners at the

State level about policies and procedures that hinder collaboration or cause systemic barriers to eligibility standards, information dissemination, funding streams, reimbursement rates, or data collection and measurements. When appropriate, the Partners develop new guidelines to be shared at the local levels. The IDB also works with Partners to resolve collaboration issues, promote innovative policies, procedures, and practices in service delivery and communicate those to local partners. The partners have determined that the indicator of success is the increased inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforces of local communities. In a data snapshot of Partner agencies, there was an increase in community employment. The Partners will continue to review this information and revise the measures as we move forward with WIOA. The Partners also recognized that there are approximately 110,000 Iowan's who might benefit from SSA disability benefits planning services. Some of these individuals are served by a variety of agencies. The Department for the Blind is focused on services being provided in the community, in integrated and competitive environments. Due to the state's shift of services from facility-based to community-based placements, there will be a need for increased individuals needing benefits planning. Partner agencies have begun to determine the feasibility of establishing a benefits planning network that will identify approved training opportunities for Iowa benefits planners, to provide technical assistance to trainers, and to develop referral processes for SSA recipients not currently connected to the service delivery system. The Department for the Blind participates in activities with other Partner agencies to cooperate as well as involve community partners, families and education in implementing an Employment First approach. The Department of Human Services and IDB have not developed a formal agreement at this time. IDB has taken steps to reach out to DHS partners to begin the development of a formal agreement to establish collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services, while also coordinating cases that are shared between the two agencies.

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

The Department collaborates to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals with developmental disabilities in the System who are described as blind and visually impaired. Other mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with those providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served.

A Memorandum of Agreement with the Governance Group (eight state agencies which includes the Iowa Department for the Blind, the State Medicaid/Mental Health Division and the Executive Director of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council) collaborated to support strategies to reduce duplication and maximize employment efforts with a clear focus on competitive, community integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) which administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa and IDB have not developed a separate formal agreement at this time.

IDB has taken steps to reach out to DHS partners to begin the development of a formal agreement to establish collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services.

The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services, while also coordinating cases that are shared between the two agencies.

3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

The Department collaborates to identify potential clients, coordinate service plans and share funding for those individuals in the System who are described as blind and visually impaired and require mental health services. Mental health services are provided statewide by various entities. Department counselors cooperate with those providers to ensure that mutual clients, or persons who may need both VR and mental health services, are adequately and appropriately served.

A Memorandum of Agreement with the Governance Group (eight state agencies which includes the Iowa Department for the Blind, the State Medicaid/Mental Health Division and the Executive Director of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council) collaborated to support strategies to reduce duplication and maximize employment efforts with a clear focus on competitive, community integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The Department of Human Services (DHS) that administers the title XIX program of the Social Security Act, and who has the primary state level responsibility for overseeing the mental health services in Iowa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU describes the financial responsibilities and the populations that are served to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and IDB have not developed a separate formal agreement at this time. IDB has taken steps to reach out to DHS partners to begin the development of a formal agreement to establish collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. The IDB has also worked with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop an agreement to identify collaborative efforts and to reduce duplication of services. Both agencies agree to share resources, discuss strategies, provide training and technical assistance and provide referral and information services, while also coordinating cases that are shared between the two agencies.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The Iowa Department for the Blind has in place a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ascertain and meet the training needs of its professional and paraprofessional staff, as well as new employees. The Iowa Department for the Blind management staff collects and compiles data to review personnel needs and to plan training and development activities for all staff. Managers review monthly reports that identify caseload activity related to referrals, applications, services, cases open and closed, and employer contacts. Managers also have access to several automated reports generated by the Department's case management system to review cases, pending referral and interview activities, and progress toward agency goals. Management staff use these reports to predict caseload activity and personnel needs. By rule, all employees are to receive an annual performance evaluation from their supervisor. Training needs are discussed then, and the employee is encouraged to offer recommendations and address concerns. All new employees must go through training in the orientation center for the blind. Employees develop non-visual skills that their clients will need and use for employment and independence. However, more importantly, this training addresses the misconceptions held by most of society to raise the expectations of blind people and provides an understanding of the positive attitude about blindness that governs the entire agency. The Department regularly provides the opportunity for staff to express needs for training and development opportunities. Responses identified needs for training related on a broad range of topics, including training related to meeting the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, the use of labor market information, working with youth, and business engagement. IDB will continue to assess the needs of staff and provide training to ensure that the needs of clients are met. Direct vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are provided by the field operations unit and by the adult orientation and adjustment center. Staffing in these two areas is as follows: Field operations: three supervisors, ten vocational rehabilitation counselors, two employment specialists, eight rehabilitation teachers, four rehabilitation technology specialists, and four support personnel. Adult orientation and adjustment center: one program administrator and six orientation center teachers. In addition to the field operations and orientation center staff the library has 11 employees who provide prevocational, educational, and vocational materials or services to clients. The Department's Randolph-Sheppard program has two employees to administer the business enterprises program. The Department processed 181 new applications in 2017 and served 452 eligible individuals. The ratio of all field operations and orientation center staff to individuals served is 38 to 452 or approximately one to 12. The ratio of vocational rehabilitation counselors to individuals served is 10 to 452, or approximately one to 45.

A total of three field operations and orientation center staff will meet retirement eligibility criteria in the next five years. Replacement of departing staff is consistent with expected staffing needs for the next five years.

There are currently 3 supervisors in field operations; there are no current vacancies and IDB does not project any vacancies in the next five years. There are 10 vocational rehabilitation counselor positions; with 1 current vacancy and no projected vacancies in the next five years. There are 8 rehabilitation teachers with 2 current vacancies and 2 expected vacancies over the next five years. There are 2 employment specialists with one vacancy and no expected vacancies over the

next five years. There are 4 rehabilitation technology specialist positions with 1 current vacancy and no expected vacancies over the next five years. There are 4 support personnel with 1 current vacancy and no expected vacancies over the next five years. There is one Orientation Center program supervisor and there are 6 orientation center teachers with 1 current teacher vacancy and one expected orientation center teacher vacancy over the next five years.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development A. Qualified Personnel Needs. section i.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development A. Qualified Personnel Needs. section i.

B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

The University of Iowa and Drake University offer graduate degree programs in vocational rehabilitation counseling rehabilitation administration. Both programs offer graduates the ability to work in the field of rehabilitation counseling and/or in mental health counseling. The following is data represents the 2015/2016 academic year:

The University of Iowa had 23 students enrolled in the Master of Arts, Rehabilitation Counseling program. Of those, none were employees sponsored by an agency or RSA; 7 were graduates sponsored by a VR agency and/or RSA; and there were 13 graduates from the previous year, 5 of which were RSA sponsored. During the same time, Drake University had 36 students enrolled in the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling and/or Rehabilitation Administration. Of those students, none were employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA; 21 were graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA, and there were 14 graduates from the previous year, 13 of which were RSA sponsored.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel Recent hires are participating in the Department's certification process as defined in subrule 111-2.1(2) of the Iowa Administrative Code. All remaining staff, including all VR counselors, meet the highest requirements in the state applicable to their profession. No significant factors exist which adversely affect the Department's ability to hire qualified staff. Therefore, no short-term or long-term strategies are necessary to address such factors. Because all Department staff already meet the highest standards in the state, no funding is necessary to implement a retraining plan. The agency actively works with the two Rehabilitation Counseling programs in Iowa and recruits

from graduate programs and through a variety of list serves to reach qualified personnel. During the past year, IDB supervised practicum and intern students in the Rehabilitation Counseling programs to provide them with field work exposure to the state rehabilitation agency. In an attempt to address the recruitment of personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities, hiring practices to assure consideration of applicants from diverse backgrounds, IDB actively attempts to recruit from a wide variety of sources including the Iowa State hiring system, Iowa Workforce Development, various list serves, and through local, state and national consumer organizations, including the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, and state chapters of the same organizations. IDB has also reached out to Helen Keller National Center to assist with recruitment of person of diverse backgrounds, including persons with disabilities. Communication with staff continues on the importance of working with our diverse client basis from a service delivery perspective, but also from a staff recruiting basis. The screening process is equitable to all applicants. Screening is done through the use of a rubric and the top scoring applicants are interviewed. Applicants are selected from the top scorers. Specific consultation has occurred with our Iowa Department of Administrative Services in efforts to expand recruitment from non-traditional sources.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development B. Personnel Development, section i.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Refer to Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development B. Personnel Development, section i.

2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The Department's plan for recruitment and training of qualified personnel is based on the highest standards in the state for VR counselors. The Department actively recruits persons who are blind or disabled, and persons from minority backgrounds. Recruitment efforts include:

Employment announcements are posted on Iowa's state employment opportunities web site.

Promotion of experienced and qualified personnel from within the agency, including personnel who are blind.

Participation in internship opportunities for students of rehabilitation counseling and placement programs through institutions which prepare students for work in the field of rehabilitation such as Drake University, the University of Iowa and Louisiana Tech University.

Employment announcements are sent to institutions preparing vocational rehabilitation counseling students, within the state and nationally.

Employment announcements are also shared with national and state level consumer organization, disability-focused and/or rehabilitation programs including but not limited to the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, the Helen Keller National Center, and the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute.

IDB has created a new email list so that any interested person can choose to be notified directly when new IDB job listings go live. Individuals can sign up for this or any of our newsletters through the sign up link on our website.

The Department's plan for retention of qualified personnel includes ongoing training opportunities for all staff; provision and support of assistive technology for staff who are blind or disabled; encouragement and support for personnel desiring advanced degrees; and opportunities for advancement within the organization. The Department does not discriminate in any way in its recruitment and hiring practices or in its administration and supervision practices against individuals who are from minority backgrounds or who have disabilities.

3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

In accordance with 34 CFR 361.18(c) of the Act, the Department for the Blind has defined and implemented personnel standards for vocational rehabilitation counselors based on state approved and recognized certification requirements promulgated under the Iowa Administrative Procedure Act. The following standards for VR counselors are based on the highest entry-level degree needed under the existing state certification requirements codified in subrule 111-2.1, Iowa Administrative Code: 2.1(2) Service specialist for the blind 2 and senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor). Certification shall be required of all vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by the Department. a. At the time of hire into the position, an individual holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and one year of work experience shall be granted provisional certification. Exceptions regarding education and experience can only be made by the Commission for the Blind upon the recommendation of the director. Provisional certification shall be recognized for a maximum period of 18 months. b. An individual may obtain full certification as a vocational rehabilitation counselor by demonstrating competency in the following areas. 1. Knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the Department's positive philosophy of blindness. 2. Knowledge of the Department's programs. 3. Skills in career planning and development. 4. Knowledge of placement techniques and practices. 5. Knowledge of occupational information, job site evaluation, and job analysis. 6. Knowledge and development of alternative techniques of blindness. 7. Knowledge of rehabilitation technology services. 8. Knowledge of disability and related issues. 9. Advocacy. 10. Case management. 11. Adjustment to blindness counseling. 12.

Assessment of consumer needs. 13. Public education and outreach. 14. Teamwork and problem solving. c. An individual holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, who has been employed by the Department as a service specialist for the blind 2 or senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor) for a minimum of six months on the date this rule is finalized, shall be considered to be a fully certified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as long as the individual maintains unbroken employment with the Department in that classification. These standards, which are the highest in the state, ensure that the professional personnel needed within the Department to carry out the vocational rehabilitation program are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. All of the professional staff at the Department meet, or are working toward meeting, these standards. To maintain standards, personnel must participate in ongoing training through the Department.

Plan to Retrain or Hire Personnel to Meet Standards: Evaluation of recruitment practices is based on the Department's ability to hire and train qualified personnel. These practices will continue to be evaluated as additional hiring becomes necessary. Since all staff currently meet the highest standards within the state, no retraining program is in place. As a general practice, the Department does not hire individuals who do not meet the established personnel standards for the services specialist for the blind 2 or senior service specialist for the blind 1 (vocational rehabilitation counselor) positions. In the event an individual is hired who does not meet the Department's personnel standards that individual would be expected to meet those standards within an established time period. The Department would devise a schedule by which the individual must report on progress and by which time period he or she must meet the standards. Failure to meet the standards within the established time period would result in termination or reassignment.

B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Refer to previous sections.

4. Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. System of staff development

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The Department actively assesses the training needs of all employees. The employee performance evaluation document is used to review an employee's performance and to identify training needs.

In addition to annual individual performance reviews, the Department surveys the staff annually to determine the training or resources they require to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively.

All new employees of the agency participate in 30 hours of small group classes featuring presentations from consumer organizations, program administrators, and Commission Board members as well as discussion of agency mission, vision and values and information about agency structure and history.

In order to ensure that direct service VR staff are in touch with the needs and concerns of the people they serve, all VR counselors, employment specialists, IL teachers, VR teachers, Orientation Center teachers, Rehabilitation Technology Specialists, supervisors, and the agency director are required to complete the following continuing education requirements on an annual basis:

- * attend and actively participate in at least 5 blindness discussion groups held in the orientation center
- * Attend at least one meeting of each consumer group. This can be a local chapter or state convention
- * Attend at least one meeting of a local support group.
- * lead a blindness issue discussion with his/her supervisor in attendance

In order to ensure that clients are receiving high quality blindness skills training and instructors have up-to-date knowledge concerning best practices for blindness rehabilitation teaching, all field and center teachers must re-complete the performance-based requirements established for new instructors every five years.

Vocational rehabilitation employees have participated in the following training activities:

- Quarterly in—service training activities focus on improving knowledge and understanding of rehabilitation topics, development and demonstration of new skill levels and organizational change projects that enhance achievement of employment outcomes for blind individuals.
- Performance and Development Solutions (PDS) courses are provided by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services / Human Resources Enterprise on a wide range of general topics and transferable job skills.
- In—house training in classroom settings and one—on—one is made available to all employees depending upon the need. Retention of qualified personnel is addressed through CEU credit for staff training, as well as opportunities for expanding skills and knowledge in a variety of areas. Leadership development and capacity—building opportunities are offered through personnel development seminars available to staff including management certifications and continuous quality improvement certification courses. All management employees have attended, are currently attending, or are will be attending the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. Employees are encouraged to participate in professional organizations such as the National Rehabilitation Association and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind in leadership roles.

In partnership with WINTAC, IDB has identified and provided training to staff in several areas including career pathways, plan development strategies, building community resources, engaging opportunity youth, trauma informed care, and building community partnerships. Some of these trainings have also been provided through additional partnerships with the Youth Technical Assistance Center and the Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center. Trainings with these and other entities, such as the Easter Seals Assistive Technology Program

will continue to be provided to staff to ensure staff receive appropriate trainings necessary to ensure quality service delivery.

B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Employees acquire information about current research by participating in professional conferences, attending training on a variety of topics, and through professional publications, such as the Journal of Rehabilitation, the Journal of Visual Impairments and Blindness, and Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) publications. Employees are asked to submit reports on conference findings to the Department's training grant administrator and their supervisor. These reports include summaries of significant issues or findings, assessments of the conference's information to their work, and an evaluation of the value of conference to other staff. Further, employees who have attended conferences or training sessions provide updates on results of research or new information to others at the in-service meetings.

5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

The Department uses outside interpreters for individuals who are not proficient in English or who use sign language. Employees are routinely counseled on how to locate qualified interpreters. Independent contracts are established as needed to obtain services from individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals. Contracts have included, but are not limited to American Sign Language, including Tactile Signing for Deaf-Blind individuals, Spanish, Vietnamese, Burmese, Swahili and others according to the needs of applicants and eligible individuals. The Department maintains a contract with Deaf Services Unlimited to provide communication services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Braille is an integral part of the training that all professional personnel receive.

6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Department pursues the following activities to coordinate the system of personnel development with personnel development activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): • Maintains an interagency agreement with the Iowa Department of Education (DE) which defines the roles and responsibilities of both agencies regarding transition activities. (see attachment 4.8(b)(2)). • The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Iowa Braille School, and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) work collaboratively under the Statewide System for Vision Services. This system ensures collaboration in service delivery to

children and youth who are blind or visually impaired. Under this system, employees exchange information about their services and approaches in order to create effective working relationships. A standard referral procedure was developed as a result of this collaboration. Area education agencies (AEAs) personnel and local school district personnel participate in developing individual education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and in providing the specialized services those students require. Itinerant teachers of the visually impaired (TVI) provide vision-related IEP services to those students who are blind or visually impaired. The TVI must refer all students who are receiving vision-related services to one of two statewide vision system's regional directors prior to the development of the student's transition IEP or no later than age fourteen. Through this collaborative effort and referral system, the Department is able to effectively coordinate its services with the Iowa Braille School and the AEAs to provide seamless transition from school, where all services are provided by the educational agencies (AEAs and local school districts), to vocational rehabilitation.

j. Statewide Assessment

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

The most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment was completed in 2016. Available data was gathered throughout 2015 and 2016 to prepare the CSNA (in some cases, 2014 data was the only available information). IDB is currently working to update and complete a new CSNA to inform the next state plan. Through the American Community Survey (ACS), the prevalence of disability in Iowa can be compared with national data. Iowa demonstrates lower prevalence of disability, including blindness and visual impairment across all ages. Regarding the 2014 ACS, 11.37% Iowans reported having a disability, compared to 12.64% nationally. The age range for reported disability also was lower than national averages. This pattern held for people who reported visual disabilities in Iowa, where 5.01% of all Iowans reported having a visual disability (versus 6.68% nationally), and 14.59% of all people with disabilities reporting a visual disability (versus 18.52% nationally).

When considering the population of people with the most significant disabilities and most likely to benefit from supported employment, the best source of secondary data available is that which derives from the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSA reported that, in 2014, 10.40% of working age Iowans said they had a disability. Of these respondents, 42.95% indicated they were employed (as compared with 83.45% of respondents who did not have disabilities). Among people SSA identified as having a visual disability, 51.04% reported being employed.

SSA also identified those people who were working age and were receiving SSI and/or SSDI benefits. Among all working age Iowans with disabilities, 18.27% were receiving benefits, of whom 2.17% of the total recipients were blind or visually impaired. Of the total recipients, 69.93% were working age individuals with disabilities, and 2.33% of working age disability recipients were individuals who were blind or visually impaired.

The working age individuals who are receiving disability benefits are the individuals who can most readily be described as those with the most significant disabilities and most likely to benefit from supported employment. Given SSA numbers, this means there are 35,824 working age individuals with disabilities in Iowa, of whom 836 are blind or visually impaired.

If the number of individuals considered most significantly disabled is expanded to include all blind or visually impaired individuals who are 64 or younger, the number increases to 1,042. This would include anyone under the age of 18. Data collection for age cohorts is projected to be modified for upcoming surveys to address changes in legislation regarding transition.

Demographic data, informant interviews and survey responses identified a need to provide increased supports to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including individuals who are deaf-blind and those with multiple disabilities and barriers to employment. Needs for people with the most significant disabilities were identified in the area of pre-employment transition services, assistive technology services, training in Braille, keyboarding, technology, home and personal management, orientation and mobility, advocacy and adjustment to blindness counseling. Client and counselor survey data also identified the need for more career exploration and work experience opportunities for students and youth with the most significant disabilities. The Department will build a network of qualified rehabilitation teachers throughout the state and work with CRPs, IWD, IVRS, and other core partners to improve training and services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

B. who are minorities;

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who are minorities the following activities were completed: Comparisons were made between the representations of minorities in Iowa to the representation of minorities in the Department's closure data. Employment outcome measures comparing minority clients to non-minority clients were also reviewed. As the following table shows, the Department's client population is somewhat more diverse than Iowa's population.

Race / Ethnicity	Iowa's Population	Case Closures (FY2011- 2015) Percentages	Case Closures (FY20112015) Counts
White	91.3%	86.43%	586
Black/African American	2.9%	8.55%	58
Hispanic or Latino	5%	2.06%	14

Race / Ethnicity	Iowa's Population	Case Closures (FY2011- 2015) Percentages	Case Closures (FY20112015) Counts
Asian	1.7%	1.47%	10
American Indian or	0.1%	0.15%	1

As the percentages above show, the Department's four-year closure data indicates an under-representation of Hispanics given Iowa's population. Closure data also shows over-representation among African American Iowans. Establishing employment trend data for minorities who have applied for VR services from the Department is made difficult by the small numbers they represent in the caseload. For example, while clients of Hispanic or Latino origin make up 2.06 percent of the case closures, the total number of these clients closed in four years is 14. With such a small population, the slightest change in numbers can cause a significant change to percentages. To obtain trend data, staff aggregated the minority closures into one group. Therefore, employment trend data was examined by comparing the non-minority population (White) to the minority population (Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, and American Indian). In addition, trend data was established using four years of closure data (FY2011-2015). The total number of minority cases closed is 83; the total number of non-minority cases closed is 586. The rate of employment after services for non-minority clients is 80.07 percent compared to 73.56 percent for minority clients. In addition, minorities have a higher rate of status 30 closures (closed after being found eligible with no plan or no services provided) and a higher rate of status 08 closures (closed prior to eligibility rate) than non-minorities. Table 2: Closure Outcomes by Minority / Non-Minority Status Rehabilitation Rate
Status 30 Rate Status 08 Rate Minorities 67.14% 11.76% 19.61% Non-Minorities 76.79% 8.11% 14.26%

While the rehabilitation rate for minorities is lower, the unemployment rate for minorities in Iowa shows that minorities do experience unemployment at a higher rate than non-minorities in the general population. The three-year ACS survey showed that the unemployment rates for African American Iowans was 14.9%, Hispanics at 9.1%, American Indian or Native Alaskan at 13.9%, and Asians at 4.5% compared to 5.2% for white Iowans. The Department seeks to ensure that all clients, regardless of race or ethnicity, achieve an employment outcome that is commensurate with their skills, abilities, and choice. Another concern may be that minority clients are closed before eligibility or before a plan or services is delivered at a higher percentage than non-minorities. Focus groups with Hispanic people with disabilities found that they tend to enter rehabilitation services from different referral sources than white clients. While white clients enter either through schools or medical practices, Hispanic people with disabilities tend to enter through regional Workforce Centers or community agencies that specialize in serving people who do not have English as their primary language. To address this difference, the Department will improve its outreach to IWD regional centers and the Adult Basic Education programs that

provide English as a second language training programs. The Iowa Department for the Blind is also working to overcome cultural and language barriers when serving individuals who are minorities. IDB has hired some staff who speak second languages which has assisted in addressing some of these needs in order to better provide services. IDB has also worked with local school districts in serving students who are minorities to ensure language barriers are addressed and to better understand other needs clients of different cultures may have.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program the following activities were completed: Identifying individuals with disabilities who are unserved or underserved by the VR program is problematic because no data exist to differentiate between individuals who are not receiving services because they are not being served from individuals who do not want to receive services. The closest approximation to this projection is to identify people with disabilities who live in poverty according to the ACS and Community Participation Survey (CPS), and make the assumption that they are not being served but would benefit from services.

In Iowa, the 2014 ACS and CPS combined surveys were used to determine the number of people living in poverty. This analysis found that there were 344,894 individuals who said they had a disability, of whom 50,308 said they were blind or visually impaired. Considering only those who are working age (18 to 64) these people total 172,777 individuals with any disability, and 24,260 individuals who are blind or visually impaired. A total of 27.10% of the individuals who indicated they had a disability live at 125% of poverty or lower, and 19.90% indicate they live at the poverty level or lower. The poverty rates for people who said they were blind or visually impaired was slightly higher, at 28.21% and 21.03% respectively.

Other individuals who report they have a disability, but do not live in poverty may include those who are employed or choosing not to receive services. Regarding the number of people with disabilities in Iowa who are employed, that percentage is 42.95% and for employed people who indicate they are blind or visually impaired it is 51.04%, but no data exist to disaggregate their income. SSA and Department of Labor data suggest that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is declining, as is the number of applications for SSDI. Other reports indicate, however, that people with disabilities are overrepresented in jobs that pay less than average wages, which has been a consistent concern of the National Federation of the Blind. No secondary data exist to extrapolate the number of people who are blind or visually impaired who are unemployed but not seeking employments.

Focus groups with people currently receiving services from the Iowa Department for the Blind found that some who were employed were underemployed (still living below 125% of poverty), and some were long-term unemployed. Under the State Unified Plan, better data regarding this issue should become available through collaboration with other agencies that collect employment data.

It is feasible that the number of unserved or underserved people who are blind or visually impaired may be among the people with less formal education. In Iowa, there are 317,542 people with disabilities age 25 and over, of whom 47,155 are blind or visually impaired. Of these, 78,433 of all people with disabilities and 11,647 of people who are blind or visually impaired have less than a high school degree. Among those with no more than a high school degree, the

numbers are 108,917 and 16,174. Among those with some college or an Associate's degree, the numbers are 83,831 and 12,449. Among those with a Bachelor's degree or higher, the numbers are 46,361 and 6,885. This suggests that 41.00% of all people with disabilities have more than a high school diploma and 60.70% of people who are blind or visually impaired have more than a high school diploma. At the Bachelors or higher level of formal education, the percentages are 14.60% and 26.40%. To improve the wages of people who are blind or visually impaired, focusing on improving the level of formal education is important, but they are succeeding at a higher rate than people with other disabilities.

IDB has recognized that the clients who are unserved or underserved require benefits counseling, disability related skills training and persons working with them to maintain high expectations for employment. Community Rehabilitation Program and One-Stop center staff have indicated that they lack experience in serving people who are blind or visually impaired and requested more training on working with these individuals. Client and counselor surveys done in preparing the 20016 CSNA have also indicated that community providers often hold lower expectations of the potential for employment and the capabilities of blind individuals. In addition, clients have reported that One-Stop center and other community service providers are often uncertain of techniques and methods to use when serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Until our One-Stop and community partners are trained, equipped and confident in providing services to our clients, they may not be the best option for providing job search and job placement services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities. The Department will develop and provide trainings to these providers and one-stop partners to increase comfort and competence in providing their services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

IDB has partnered with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to produce a series of short, humorous training videos and a facilitators guide that are being used to provide training about issues faced by blind job seekers when accessing workforce centers and searching for employment. These videos are designed to help our WIOA partners and others to better serve blind job seekers as well as increase understanding of the barriers to employment experienced by blind people and other people with disabilities. These videos are available on YouTube and are being used by our employment specialists and rehab counselors as they talk to groups across the state. IDB has also partnered with stakeholders within each region to create Disability Access Committees which address the issues relating to provision of services, assist with compliance with state and federal laws regarding physical and program access, and provide staff trainings and supports.

IDB has also used the integrated resource team strategies within several regions to address the needs of clients who have been unserved or underserved. This strategy has allowed IDB to coordinate services and leverage resources and expertise to meet the needs of individuals so that they can achieve competitive and integrated employment. This strategy has allowed for communication across systems, for systems to share in outcomes, and reduce staff time needed to implement a plan for employment. The IDB hosted a training for partner agencies and internal staff in December 2016 to assist with developing a common knowledge of the strategy and how it could be implemented.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system the following activities were completed:

Iowa Department for the Blind works with multiple state agencies to coordinate services for consumers. The most services are provided to consumers who are living in or near poverty. In 2015 and 2016, IDB conducted focus groups with IDB consumers who were living in or near poverty and through these focus groups, the following agencies were identified as also providing services: in addition to members of the statewide workforce development system, the coordinating agencies were, (1) educational institutions including secondary and postsecondary providers, (2) Iowa Workforce Development, (3) Iowa Temporary Assistance for Needy Families including food stamps and free/reduced lunch, (4) health care providers, and (5) community rehabilitation programs.

Structurally, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services does not serve people who are blind or visually impaired, but there are some individuals who are co-enrolled. Participants in the client focus groups voiced the following concerns regarding the other partnering agencies: 1.a. K-12 educational institutions received services through the Iowa Braille School and services were provided in an appropriate and effective manner. IDB also conducted interviews with Iowa Braille School personnel in 2016 in which we identified the process by which services are provided and the area for future planning includes improved transitions from the youth they serve to the vocational services of IDB. 1.b. Postsecondary educational institutions received uneven marks from focus group participants in the 2015-2016 focus groups and through surveys to active clients during the same year regarding services. All participants were concerned about policies, procedures, practices and resources related to accessibility. Of special concern was the lack of timely information regarding changes in plans such as class cancellations. Follow-up focus groups with postsecondary personnel identified the promising practice of a compute app they developed that provided auditory guides and resources that could be used to improve access to services. 2. Iowa Workforce Development received poor marks from participants due to accessibility concerns. Follow-up focus groups in 2016 with IWD personnel indicated they needed more timely and ongoing training in how to make their services available to people from IDB because they were not sufficiently prepared to provide accessible services. 3. Iowa TANF services and food stamps were reviewed in the same manner as was IWD. The physical, procedural, and interpersonal approach used, especially by Department of Human Services personnel, was not satisfactory. Training and accessibility assessments are needed to ensure IDB consumers can access services successfully. 4. Health care providers were criticized in a similar manner. Accessibility was uneven, with some providers offering excellent assistance and others being unprepared to offer accessible services. Word of mouth among people who were blind or visually impaired identified the best providers, but not all of them took Medicaid, so additional outreach and training by IDB is warranted. 5. Community rehabilitation agencies also need training and technical assistance in serving IDB consumers. The quality of services was uneven with some agencies providing excellent services while others seemed unable to understand how to address the training and employment barriers related to blindness.

The survey of IDB consumers identified a similar pattern. Consumers tended to be satisfied with IDB services, but were less satisfied when they sought services from other agencies (other than K-12 schools). Collaboration across agencies needs improvement and is intended to be addressed under the Statewide Unified Plan.

The State Workforce Development Board has now established a Disability Access Committee to lead a Statewide Disability Access Initiative to: Ensure that Iowa's one-stop delivery system meets all accessibility requirements for individuals with disabilities (under the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.) ; to increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities to the programs, services, and activities of Iowa's one-stop delivery system; to continuously improve for individuals with disabilities the provision of services within the one-stop delivery system and to improve opportunities for individuals with disabilities in competitive integrated employment.

IDB counselors participate actively in local disability access committee work. At this time, physical facility accessibility studies have been completed and are being reviewed by IWD to develop transition plans for each local one stop office. Through the Disability Resource Coordinators, trainings are being developed in the areas of disability etiquette and customer focus.

These trainings are beginning in the five offices holding the Disability Resource Coordinator position and then will move to the other workforce center offices. Customer focus groups have also happened around the state with the intent of gathering customer feedback regarding services being provided. Partners of the One-Stop Centers have also completed surveys gauging staff comfort level in dealing with a variety of topics related to disability. Trainings and strategies are being developed in each region/office to address identified needs and to better serve clients/customers.

IDB counselors and other staff have provided trainings and information in several one-stop centers around Iowa, in the areas such as serving blind Iowans, assistive technology, and vocational rehabilitation services. "Hello, is anybody here?" is a collection of 4 vignettes developed by the staff of the Iowa Department for the Blind with the support of the Workforce Innovation and Technical Institute for the purpose of engaging service professionals in discussion that will support them in improving how they include individuals that are blind in customer service. The objectives of the combination of discussion and viewing of the videos are: to recognize the customer service experiences in American Job Centers for blind customers; to promote service design that achieves full inclusion, to increase understanding of what "program access" really means, to build the comfort level of America's Job Center staff in working with blind consumers and to increase staff understanding of some of the particular challenges faced by blind job seekers. In practice, each of the 4 vignettes have been provided "live" in staff training sessions, with a Dept. of the Blind staff person facilitating discussion in between the segments. With the use of this facilitator's guide, and the videos, others outside of the Iowa Department for the Blind can host the same discussion at their offices. These vignettes have been used with community rehabilitation partners and workforce partners and have received positive feedback from participants in the trainings. IDB will continue to provide education and training to our partners to assist them in their continued work in providing services to blind Iowans.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Iowa who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services the following activities were

completed: This section examines whether persons in a particular age group are an unserved or underserved population. Comparisons were made between the representations of age groups in Iowa to the representation of age groups in the Department's closure data. Employment outcome measures by age group were also reviewed. Among the working population in Iowa, persons aged 14-24 represent the largest age group (18.94%), followed closely by 45-54 age group (17.71%). The median age in Iowa is 38. Iowa's Statewide Vision System, which coordinates the work of Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Specialist itinerant services, reports that 515 students were being served. The ACS survey estimates for visual difficulties in Iowa by age are as follows:

Table 3: ACS Estimates of Visual Difficulties by Age Group Estimated with Visual Difficulty Percentage of Total Population

Age Group	Estimated with Visual Difficulty	Percentage of Total Population
5 -17	2,879	0.55%
18-34	4,646	0.69%
35-64	19, 079	1.03%

Persons aged 45-54 represent the largest age group in the VR case closure data, followed by persons aged 35-44 and then 14-24. Older individuals are represented a bit higher in the Department's VR caseload in comparison to their representation in the state. As the ACS survey data show, blindness and vision loss occurs more frequently among the older population groups. Therefore, the Department's case closure data demonstrate that it is serving the age groups in proportion to Iowa's population. The Iowa minority population is changing as the white population ages and the minority population is younger. A total of 15.8% of white Iowans are age 65 and older, while only 3.88% of minority Iowans are in that age range. A total of 23.3% of white Iowans are age 17 and under, while 36.49% of minority Iowans are in that age range. A review of data from cases closed between FY2011 and FY2015 shows that young adults are not closing as successfully after receiving services as their older counterparts. Table 4: Employment Rate after VR Services by Age

Age at Application	Total Cases Closed After Receiving Services (FY2011 thru FY2015)	Percentage Employed After Receiving Services
14-24	109	64.22%
25-34	71	69.01%
35-44	120	74.17%
45-54	137	78.10%
55-64	94	88.30%
65-74	29	93.10%

As recent unemployment data show the experience of younger clients seeking work is similar to that experienced by their sighted peers. Data from the 2010 Current Population Survey show that all young Iowans experience more difficulty in finding employment than older adults. Table 5: Iowa Unemployment Rate by Age

Age Group	Unemployment Rate
16-19	16.4%
20-24	9.2%
25-34	6.4%
35-44	4.7%
45-54	5.1%
55-64	4.2%
65+	2.7%

Many factors contribute to the employment status of young adults, including work experience, availability of entry-level jobs, educational attainment, and skills. Certainly, the impact of the recession on this population as well as the 45-54 age group has been greater than on other age groups. One positive sign is that those clients aged 14 - 24 at application tend to be placed in full time jobs at a higher rate than other age groups. Clients aged 45 - 54 at application have seen a steady decrease in percentage of full-time employment since 2008. (Refer to the heading "Trends in Employment, Earnings, and Hours" below for more information.) However, the Department needs to continue focusing on young adults to ensure they attain the work experience they need in order to be successful later in life, particularly in this difficult and competitive labor market.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

There are 144 Community Rehabilitation Programs in Iowa and IDB works with 14, primarily for employment services. A survey of IDB counselors indicated that 100% of them considered CRPs to need training in promoting supported employment and pre-employment services. They also reported that CRPs were unaware of the alternative techniques that could be used to engage in employment and often did not know how to provide training materials and other resources in formats that were accessible to people who were blind or visually impaired. The Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment, which has worked closely with CRPs for several years, facilitated meetings with IDB counselors and clients to discuss best practices in the delivery of customized employment services. Those discussions resulted in determining that CRPs also need training in the area of customized employment.

Client and counselor survey completed in the fall of 2015 results have identified that community providers lack awareness about blindness and the alternative techniques and potential accommodations for those who are blind or visually impaired. While CRPs can be a resource in addressing the needs of students, youth, and people with the most significant disabilities for career exploration and work experience, they need training to increase their comfort and competence in providing these services. The Department will work with community rehabilitation providers, centers for independent living, and independent contractors to provide clients with the training and supports they need within their own community.

Because people who are blind or visually impaired live in specific geographical areas, IDB can target those CRPs that are most likely to service our clients and provide training to them. IDB counselors indicate that, as well as providing training in the employment strategies listed above; these agencies also need training in cross-agency collaboration and improving the employment expectations of clients and their families.

3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

According to a report provided by the Iowa Braille School (December, 2015) there are 114 students who are receiving services or consultation based on vision loss in school grades six through eight. There were 116 students receiving services in school grades nine through twelve. Approximately 35 percent of those students are in the Des Moines metro and surrounding area. Other students are throughout Iowa, with more than five students in the following counties: Des Moines, Woodbury, Pottawattamie, Dubuque, Linn, Johnson, and Clinton. Forty of Iowa's counties are reported to not have any students identified as receiving services and other counties. Forty-four counties have between one and four students receiving services. This number does not include students who may have additional disabilities including vision loss who are not receiving services.

It is estimated that in the next year, the number of students that will be referred through the IESBVI referral process will be approximately 85 students. Fifty-eight individuals are currently

listed in the IDB transition database and 113 individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 are currently receiving vocational rehabilitation services (eFORCE, February, 2016).

The Department's closure data shows those with higher educational attainment close more successfully after receiving services than those with less education. Clients whose educational attainment is greater than a high school diploma close successfully at a high rate: Associates degree 71.17%; Bachelor's degree 86.84 percent; and Master's degree: 90.20%. The employment rate after services for those with a high school education is 73.91%.

The median income for clients is lower than their counterparts in Iowa's general population. A client's work experience, type of employment, and the presence of public support all impact the weekly earnings the client achieves. While this is true of all people with disabilities across the nation, it offers evidence to use with schools to better engage them in career and transition planning.

Table 6: Median Earnings by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Iowa ACS Estimate	Dept. for the Blind Status 26 Closures (2011-2015)
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	\$26,606	\$12,938.20
Some college or associate's degree	\$31,038	\$22,769.65
Bachelor's degree	\$42,147	\$26,992.73
Graduate or professional degree	\$55,245	\$47,364.15

When examining the unsuccessful closure statuses of clients, applicants to the program are more likely to be closed before a plan is developed than closed as unemployed after a plan is developed. This is the case regardless of the educational attainment of clients and suggests barriers to the referral, intake, IPE planning process. These findings suggest that transition career services and pre-employment transition services are not sufficiently coordinated with school IEPs and they are not prepared to transition to adult services. The survey of counselors found that school special education teachers often do not notify the counselors of upcoming IEP meetings and that, upon review of those IEP, career planning across adult service agencies are not well developed.

Career and transition and planning services tend not to be provided by teachers of the visually impaired because they do not have curricula to address this area. Providing such training to these teachers, and obtaining better information to counselors regarding upcoming IEP meetings were viewed by counselors as ways to reduce the number of people closed before an IPE is developed.

k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's three-year American Community Survey, Iowa has an estimated 2,755 Iowans between the ages of 5 and 17 who have vision difficulties. According to the same survey, there are an estimated 24,620 Iowans between the ages of 18 and 64 who have visual difficulties. The Department estimates approximately 525 individuals will be eligible to receive services under title I of the Act in PY18; with 100 of these being students with disabilities. Approximately 75 individuals will concurrently be eligible to receive services under title VI, part B of the Act. The ratio of applicants and eligible individuals served to vocational rehabilitation counselors will be approximately 60 to one. The current staffing level does enable IDB to provide core services to clients.

When numbers of referrals increase, the Department identifies ways to effectively streamline processes to enable the staff to continue meeting client needs. Budgetary considerations and state regulations that limit personnel per state agency prevent us from changing our staffing to any great extent. Services are monitored to assure that all core services are provided and that all Services are monitored to assure that all core services are provided and that all active Individualized Plans for Employment are carried out in full. The Department is not under an order of selection and will be able to serve all applicants and eligible individuals. During the next five years, it is projected that the number of students with disabilities and individuals those with most significant disabilities, will continue to increase from the current level. Costs of services provided under title I of the Act are estimated at \$7,038,379. Costs for supported employment services under Title VI, Part B of the Act are estimated at \$57,000.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. The VR Program;

Refer to k. Annual Estimates, section 1.

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

Refer to k. Annual Estimates, section 1.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

IDB is not under an order of selection.

3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

IDB is not under an order of selection.

4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Refer to k. Annual Estimates, section 1. IDB is not under an order of selection.

I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is an independent consumer-controlled commission; there is no State Rehabilitation Council. A Board of Commissioners governs IDB and works together with the agency Director to develop and agree to annual goals and priorities. The mission of IDB is to “Empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently.” The Department recognizes the need to improve services to Iowans who are blind and visually impaired across all agencies and organizations in the state. The Iowa Department’s most recent comprehensive needs assessment was completed in 2016. The Department is now in the process of completing work on a more current CSNA which will be used to inform the goals and priorities of the department for PY 2020. Through participation in workgroups related to the development of the Unified State Plan, the Iowa Department for the Blind has collaborated with other core partners to develop the State’s vision and goals, based on the Governor’s economic goals, Iowa’s NGA Talent Pipeline Goals, and Core Partner agency and stakeholder feedback.

Unified State Plan Vision Iowa’s workforce delivery systems will collaborate to build a Future Ready Iowa - a pipeline of skilled workers who are prepared to meet the workforce needs of Iowa’s current and emerging industries. In alignment with the National Governor’s Association Talent Pipeline vision and goals, this unified plan will ensure individuals are prepared for dynamic careers through an emphasis on lifelong learning while meeting the needs of employers. Iowa’s workforce delivery system will assist more Iowans to become Future Ready by attaining the “new minimum” of high-quality education, training, and work readiness by bringing together education, rehabilitation, workforce, and economic development resources and ensuring that all Iowans have access to an integrated and efficient workforce delivery system. Future Ready Iowans will be ready to meet the employment challenges of today and into the future so that ALL Iowans work in competitive, integrated employment settings.

Unified State Plan Goals Goal I: Iowa’s employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and Future Ready workers. Goal II: All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation. Goal III: Iowa’s workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

Iowa Department for the Blind Goals and Priorities

The Iowa Department for the Blind’s mission is to empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently. The responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation program is to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities, to achieve high quality, competitive integrated employment. The Department will work with Iowa’s workforce system to increase the employment of such individuals in the competitive labor market through participation in job-driven training and provision of necessary supports.

In order to assist the state to meet the goals of the Unified State Plan and to meet the needs of Iowans who are blind and visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities, the Iowa Department for the Blind, after reviewing the current comprehensive statewide needs assessment has identified the following major goals:

IDB Goal 1: Iowa employers will become more aware of the Iowa Department for the Blind and the pool of advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers the department can provide access to.

IDB Goal 2: All Iowans who are blind or visually impaired and require VR services to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment receive them.

IDB Goal 3: All individuals who are successfully closed employed will have found employment that aligns with their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and places them on their desired career pathway.

IDB Goal 4: The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

IDB Goal 5: Build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired.

In addition to the goals, and necessitated by emerging circumstances, the Iowa Department for the Blind will focus on the following additional priorities:

Priority 1: Implementation of WIOA with regard to Pre-employment transition services and Supported Employment.

Priority 2: On-going need for the professional development of all staff providing direct services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Priority 3: Integration of a new case management system to allow for the tracking of requirements under WIOA.

Priority 4: Increase outreach efforts to individuals from minority backgrounds.

The Iowa Department for the Blind will continue to work with current standards and indicators knowing that the state's common performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA are currently being developed and will greatly change the standards currently used for vocational rehabilitation.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

Refer to: 1. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

Refer to: 1. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

Refer to: 1. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

Refer to: 1. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

Refer to: 1. State Goals and Priorities, section 1.

m. Order of Selection

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:

A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

At present, the Iowa Department for the Blind is not implementing an Order of Selection. Policy and procedures continue to be reviewed should it ever be imminent.

B. The justification for the order.

Not applicable.

C. The service and outcome goals.

Not applicable.

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

Not applicable.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Not applicable, the IDB is not under an order of selection.

2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

Not applicable. The IDB is not under an order of selection.

n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

The Department's supported employment goal is that all blind and visually impaired Iowans who require supported employment services to obtain or retain competitive integrated employment receive them. The Department receives title VI, part B funds which are used solely for supported employment services. At least 50% of the title VI funds are to be used to provide pre-employment transition services to eligible youth with the most significant disabilities. Funds are

to be distributed according to the needs of eligible individuals for whom supported employment services are deemed to be appropriate.

Supported employment services will be purchased on an individual basis and customized for each individual's situation. Because the need for supported employment services is likely to exceed the funds allocated for them under title VI, part B, funds from title I will be used to supplement the costs of supported employment services that are listed on an individual's supported employment individualized plan for employment (IPE). A lack of title VI, part B funds will not restrict or prohibit the inclusion of supported employment services on an IPE or the purchase or delivery of such services when they are needed.

The Department continues to develop relationships with community rehabilitation providers and educational partners to obtain referrals for career exploration and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals. The Department promotes competitive and integrated employment for individuals receiving supported employment services. Policy will be changed to allow for the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for up to 4 years or until the individual turns age 25, whichever comes first, as well as increasing extended services from 18 to 24 months as stated in the WIOA. Customized Employment has been added as a vocational rehabilitation service option.

In PY 2016, supported employment services were being provided to 22 clients; the number being served in PY 2017 is 71 individuals. This number nearly tripled our expectations, with 30 of these individuals being youth with disabilities. As part of the State Plan, IDB completed the mandatory Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to determine the current needs of Iowans with disabilities, as well as assess the services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs. The Department has found that Community Rehabilitation programs are often unaware of the alternative techniques a person who is blind may use in accomplishing a job task. This lack of information and training can lead to a lack of appropriate placements in competitive and integrated employment.

During the timeframe that this state plan covers, the Department will continue to monitor the number of individuals receiving supported employment services, taking into consideration the WIOA requirements to expend 50 percent of the total grant on supported employment services to youth with most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years or until the individual turns 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth, whichever comes first. The Department is also exploring Customized Employment and work based learning opportunities. The Department will partner with Community Rehabilitation Organizations to generate referrals for individuals who can benefit from competitive integrated employment in their communities. The Department will also provide training and resources to community rehabilitation programs to assist them in meeting and understanding the needs and capabilities of individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

The Department has provided several trainings to community rehabilitation providers across the state, specifically to those providers currently serving clients who are receiving supported employment services. The purpose of these trainings has been to increase knowledge of staff providing SE services to clients in areas including but not limited to: alternative techniques of blindness, assistive technology, job development strategies, agency policy. The Department will continue to monitor impact of these trainings to CRP's by reviewing outcome measures and

client and program feedback. The Department is working to develop strategies to increase the quality of service providers being used across the state to serve our clients.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

Refer to n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds, section 1.

B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

Refer to n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds, section 1.

o. State's Strategies

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

In order to assist the state to meet the goals of the Unified State Plan and to achieve the goals and priorities of the Iowa Department for the Blind, several strategies were identified.

WIOA Goal 1: Iowa's employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and future ready workers.

IDB Goal 1: Iowa employers will become more aware of the Iowa Department for the Blind and the pool of advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers the department can provide access to. Strategy 1: Build mutually beneficial partnerships with Iowa businesses. Measure: The number of business relationships developed. The number of services provided to businesses. Strategy 2: IDB will collaborate with WIOA partners to ensure Iowa's employers have ready access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers. Measure: The number of partnerships with employers developed that create or expand work experience, internship, on-the-job training, and employment opportunities for Iowans who are blind and visually impaired. Strategy 3: IDB will build intra-agency collaboration that strengthens the agency's ability aid employers in the ability to provide accommodations and supports. Measure: The number of individuals who obtain employment and whose cases are closed successfully rehabilitated.

WIOA Goal 2: All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities in the nation.

IDB Goal 2: All Iowans who are blind or visually impaired and require VR services to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment receive them. Strategy 1: Actively engage the community to increase awareness of the mission, vision, and services available to Iowans who are blind and visually impaired and how to access them. Measure: Number of referrals to the Iowa Department

for the Blind. Strategy 2: Outreach to potentially eligible students and their support systems to enhance awareness of, and the opportunities to receive IDB services. Measure: Number of referrals received through the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Strategy 3: All eligible individuals will have well-developed and supported individualized plans for employment that provide them with the education & training plans needed to achieve their career goal. Measure: Number of individuals successfully employed in competitive and integrated employment. Strategy 4: We will advocate that all eligible or potentially eligible students will have well-developed individualized education plans that align with their career goals. Measure: Number of students who have IEP goals aligned with their career goal. Strategy 5: Assist all students who are blind or visually impaired in their career path navigation by offering a variety of options supporting the transition from school to work. Measure: Number of students receiving pre-employment transition services prior to high school graduation. Strategy 6: Prepare Iowa's students who are blind or visually impaired to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's workforce. Measure: Number of students participating in paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. Strategy 7: Engage Iowa's students who are blind or visually impaired in the career path development process using creative, progressive, and self-directed techniques in the delivery of career services. Measure: Percentage of students that have IEP goals that align with their career path interests.

IDB Goal 3: All individuals who are successfully closed employed will have found employment that aligns with their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and places them on their desired career pathway. Strategy 1: IDB will ensure IPE goals reflect the clients' knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests and the activities they engage in will align with career pathway. Measure: Percentage of services provided that align with the IPE goals. Strategy 2: IDB will promote participation in career pathways to meet business sector and consumer employment needs. Measure: Percentage of successfully closed cases who acquired skill gains toward credential or employment. Strategy 3: IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Percentage of successful employment in competitive integrated work settings.

WIOA Goal 3: Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless, and integrated manner.

IDB Goal 4: The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Strategy 1: IDB will collect ongoing satisfaction data from counselors and clients on access to and participation in Iowa's workforce delivery system. Measure: Results of satisfaction survey data, tracking key points in the delivery of services. Strategy 2: IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Number of collaborations that result in a relationship with employers. IDB Goal 5: Build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired. Strategy 1: Conduct outreach to community rehabilitation providers. Measure: Number of community rehabilitation providers contacted in areas of high density clients. Strategy 2: Provide trainings to community rehabilitation providers in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Measure: Number of individuals participating in trainings.

Priority 1: Implementation of WIOA with regard to Pre-employment transition services and Supported Employment. Outcome: Appropriate changes are made in policies and procedures. Priority 2: On-going need for the professional development of all staff providing direct services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Outcome: Trainings provided to meet the needs of staff providing direct services. Priority 3: Integration of a new case management system to allow for the tracking of requirements under WIOA. Outcome: Tracking mechanisms will be established. Priority 4: Increase outreach efforts to individuals from minority backgrounds. Outcome: Establishment of relationships with entities serving individuals from minority backgrounds.

2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.

The Department for the Blind provides assistive technology services and assistive technology devices to its clients as the needs are identified through each stage of the rehabilitation process. Through provision of services outlined in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), IDB provides intensive training to individuals in the area of assistive technology including the use of screen magnification, screen-reading software, audio software and devices so that individuals who experience blindness or low vision can quickly be prepared to be able to participate in experiences and gain skills and credentials needed to obtain and maintain self-sustaining employment.

IDB Rehabilitation Technology Specialists work collaboratively with clients, training providers, and employers to identify and implement any technology needed for the individual to be able to participate in experiences or gain skills or credentials necessary to obtain and maintain self-sustaining employment. IDB is working to increase the number of technology trainers to ensure that the agency can respond statewide in a timely manner to critical assistive technology skill development needs to enable clients to be job-ready.

The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped - Career Resource Center provides technology, equipment and software to be used to prepare, gain and maintain skills and credentials needed for employment. Provision of talking book players, loaner devices to test out equipment, and training equipment is also provided to clients statewide.

3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

Like other blind agencies, self-referral is the most commonly recorded referral source. Many applicants have heard about the Department through community organizations and family or friends who have attended a presentation or previously received services. Therefore, outreach events must be varied and frequent. The Department's staff coordinate marketing, outreach, and public education efforts. These outreach activities include traditional approaches such as open house events, community based trainings, vision loss resource fairs, print and radio interviews, distribution of informational materials, tours of the Department, and presentations to employers, community services organizations, schools, self-help groups, and more. These events reach over

6,000 people annually. In addition to these traditional outreach approaches, the Department utilizes social media such as its web site, blogs, Twitter, and Facebook to promote its services and philosophy of blindness, maintain contact with constituents in the field, and communicate with community partners. With the addition of a dedicated intake specialist to the IDB team, all referrals are processed efficiently through a common gateway back to the Department.

As part of its marketing efforts, materials have been updated and reprinted for these target populations: Families & Friends, Service Providers, Healthcare Professionals, Community Organizations, Businesses, and Educators. The brochures contain information that is relevant to its intended audience about the Department's main services: Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living and the Library. The information developed for these audiences is also available on the Department's web site. Spanish language versions of many of these brochures are now available to serve that segment of the population and have been circulated through community outlets.

In addition to direct contact with the public, we utilize other providers throughout the state to assist us in promoting the Department. Through its involvement with statewide Workforce System partnerships and the statewide Governance Group, the Department has established a network of referral sources to tap into populations who may not be directly contacted by the Department or may not initially believe or realize the Department is a resource for them.

IDB, in partnership with IVRS and the Omaha Tribal nation, who also serves sections of Monona County have developed an MOU to increase partnership and collaboration in the delivery of VR services to increase employment outcomes for this targeted population, including those with the most significant disabilities and students with disabilities.

4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

The Iowa Department for the Blind continues to work with school districts and the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI) to increase and expand services for students. The Department is working with the IESBVI to increase referrals of students at the age of 14. Ninety days prior to the transition IEP (no later than age 14) students are informed about Vocational Rehabilitation services available through the IDB by an IESBVI representative. Releases to share information are also gathered. The Department receives the referral and begins attempting to contact the family and student to assist them in the application process. The emphasis to serve youth and students with disabilities increases the need to collaborate with community rehabilitation providers in the provision of pre-employment transition services in order to increase the competitive integrated employment outcomes. Ongoing collaboration and communication amongst IDB, IESBVI, local educators, parents, and students are important to the overall transition efforts in Iowa. IDB staff and administrators will continue a process of training educators and service providers about the services the Department provides to students who are blind or visually impaired. One area of need often identified with students who are blind and visually impaired is a lack of understanding and ability to use assistive technologies. In effort to meet this need, the IDB offers a wide range and expanding

menu of assistive technology services to transition age youth and educators of transition age youth. IDB technology specialists provide technology assessments and one-on-one assistive technology training to transition age youth at school or at home. IDB staff attend IEP meetings and consult with special education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers. IDB technology specialists have implemented a program in which they provide a monthly webinar about assistive technology for TVIs, para-educators, and other education professionals. By mid-2019, the IDB will be launching a similar webinar series for teens.

IDB and IESBVI are working together to provide information and training to K-12 students and their families at annual Spring Vision Conferences. In addition, each entity is providing the other with training. For example, IDB will provide IESBVI staff with training and information about vocational rehabilitation at their annual Summer Institute as well as their annual Fall Vision Conference. IESBVI is providing IDB with training about the educational processes during a quarterly staff in-service meeting. The Department transition specialist works closely with the transition and family services coordinator for IESBVI; these individuals regularly discuss programs, potential referrals, processes, collaboration opportunities and potential improvements to transition programs and services. These efforts are all designed to improve communication, training, and knowledge among transition teams working with blind and visually impaired students. The Department continues to work to build relationships within communities across the state in efforts to connect students in high school with VR services. IDB counseling staff works with Regional Workforce Investment Boards and Transition Advisory Committees to inform them of the program and to develop work experience and career exploration opportunities for the transition students in integrated settings. IDB has also developed an internal Youth Employment Services team to bring together the different divisions of the agency to further discuss ways to improve and expand VR services. IDB has also developed several programs to expand the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services, to students who are blind or visually impaired.

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

The Department utilizes CRPs throughout Iowa when necessary for job coaching, assessments, training, or placement in supported employment. As the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment demonstrated, a small percentage of the Department's clients access services from the CRPs. Our small pool of clients makes it difficult to build models of on-going collaboration. Developing individualized services with the CRP as the need arises is the approach the Department has found works best for the client and the CRPs. Also, because few CRP personnel have extensive experience in working with blind individuals, the Department works closely with CRP staff as necessary to ensure the client receives training and other services that appropriately addresses any additional impairment the client may have as well as the client's blindness or vision loss.

The IDB participates as a member of the Governance Group in activities designed to enhance employment services for Iowans with disabilities, including Iowans who are blind and visually impaired. This partnership engages in systems-change initiatives that impact the coordination of employment services to Iowans with disabilities. IDB participates in these efforts to ensure that the employment of individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those individuals

who have the most significant disabilities have the opportunity to work in integrated, community-based, competitive employment settings.

IDB recognizes that we must assist CRPs in the state to increase their knowledge and skills in the provision of services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. IDB will build mutually beneficial partnerships with entities in the community that provide or could provide services to Iowans who are blind or visually impaired. We will conduct outreach to community rehabilitation providers throughout the state of Iowa. IDB staff will provide trainings to community rehabilitation providers in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

The Iowa Department for the Blind will continue to work with current standards and indicators knowing that the state's common performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA are currently being developed. Once the final regulations are published, the Department will review, evaluate and implement the performance expectations.

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

The Iowa Department for the Blind continues to participate with the state's One-Stop System partners on the strategic planning for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including developing strategies to improve access to individuals participating in programs and trainings through One-Stop Centers and partner agencies. The Department also collaborates with other community agencies to ensure that their programs are accessible to clients who are blind or visually impaired. The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The following strategies are used to assist the state workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities: - IDB will collaborate with WIOA partners to ensure Iowa's employers have ready access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers. - IDB will build intra-agency collaboration that strengthens the agency's ability aid employers in the ability to provide accommodations and supports. - IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. - The Iowa Department for the Blind will collaborate with Iowa's workforce delivery system to identify and reduce barriers to accessible, seamless and integrated services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. - IDB will collect ongoing satisfaction data from counselors and clients on access to and participation in Iowa's workforce delivery system. - IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments.

The Iowa Department for the Blind strategies were designed to achieve the goals and priorities of the Iowa Department for the Blind. The strategies used will be reviewed annually and progress will be measured.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

The following are the strategies being used by the Iowa Department for the Blind to achieve the goals and priorities established by the State: - Build mutually beneficial partnerships with Iowa businesses. Measure: The number of business relationships developed. The number of services provided to businesses - IDB will collaborate with WIOA partners to ensure Iowa's employers have ready access to advanced, skilled, diverse, and future ready workers. Measure: The number of partnerships with employers developed that create or expand work experience, internship, on-the-job training, and employment opportunities for Iowans who are blind and visually impaired. - IDB will build intra-agency collaboration that strengthens the agency's ability aid employers in the ability to provide accommodations and supports. Measure: The number of individuals who obtain employment and whose cases are closed successfully rehabilitated. - Actively engage the community to increase awareness of the mission, vision, and services available to Iowans who are blind and visually impaired and how to access them. Measure: Number of referrals to the Iowa Department for the Blind. - Outreach to potentially eligible students and their support systems to enhance awareness of, and the opportunities to receive IDB services. Measure: Number of referrals received through the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. - All eligible individuals will have well-developed and supported individualized plans for employment that provide them with the education & training plans needed to achieve their career goal. Measure: Number of individuals successfully employed in competitive and integrated employment. - We will advocate that all eligible or potentially eligible youth will have well-developed individualized education plans that align with their career goals. Measure: Number of students who have IEP goals aligned with their career goal. - Assist all youth who are blind or visually impaired in their career path navigation by offering a variety of options supporting the transition from school to work. Measure: Number of students receiving pre-employment transition services prior to high school graduation. - Prepare Iowa's youth to meet the evolving demands of tomorrow's workforce. Measure: Number of students participating in paid work experiences prior to high school graduation. - Engage Iowa's youth in the career path development process using creative, progressive, and self-directed techniques in the delivery of career services. Measure: Percentage of students that have IEP goals that align with their career path interests. - IDB will ensure IPE goals reflect the clients' knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests and the activities they engage in will align with career pathway. Measure: Percentage of services provided that align with the IPE goals. - IDB will promote participation in career pathways to meet business sector and consumer employment needs. Measure: Percentage of successfully closed cases who acquired skill gains toward credential or employment. - IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Percentage of successful employment in competitive integrated work settings. - IDB will collect ongoing satisfaction data from counselors and clients on access to and participation in Iowa's workforce delivery system. Measure: Results of satisfaction survey data, tracking key points in the delivery of services. - IDB will partner with other agencies to develop relationships with employers to increase opportunities for individuals to become employed in integrated and competitive environments. Measure: Number of collaborations that result in a relationship with employers. - Conduct outreach to community rehabilitation providers. Measure: Number of community rehabilitation providers contacted in areas of high density clients. - Provide trainings to community rehabilitation providers in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or

visually impaired. Measure: Number of individuals participating in trainings. The Iowa Department for the Blind strategies were designed to achieve the goals and priorities of the Iowa Department for the Blind. The strategies used will be reviewed annually and progress will be measured.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

The Department will utilize the following strategies in the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve VR services to blind and visually impaired Iowans under the State Plan and for the support of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

Statewide Independent Living Council. The purpose of the SILC is to strengthen the voice of Iowans with disabilities on issues affecting their lives, to build a statewide network of centers for independent living, and to collaborate with our partners in advancing the independence, productivity, and full inclusion of Iowans with disabilities. Pursuant to the existing state plan for independent living, the Department allocates title 1 funds and part B funds to the SILC. The Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is an independent nonprofit corporation whose Council Members are appointed by the Governor, and a majority of whom are persons with disabilities. Under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the SILC has the responsibility to plan for the coordination and expansion of independent living services in Iowa, and to promote the development of a statewide network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Centers for Independent Living and the Department work in collaboration in many ways. Collaborate in many ways to include heading up system change; that is help to organize people with disabilities to demand their civil rights, and fight against discrimination. Many of the freedoms and physical accommodations that people with and without disabilities enjoy today would not otherwise exist such as curb cuts, lifts on buses, elevators at metro transit stations, the passage of 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. At the Department, they work in collaboration with us when we host Vision Loss Resource Fairs, they help to get information out regarding our Community-Based Trainings, and they refer individuals with severe vision loss or who are blind. Overall, we collaborate to promote advocacy, independent living, and changing systems that negatively impact people with any kind of disability.

Iowa Self Employment (ISE) Program for Persons with Disabilities. The Iowa Self Employment program for Persons with Disabilities is a collaborative effort between IVRS and the Department. The Iowa Self-Employment program exists to provide quality, expert, client-centered services to Iowans with disabilities that embrace diversity, promote successful business ownership and result in self-sufficiency and economic development. This program partners with the Iowa Department for the Blind and its clients to offer entrepreneurial assessment, market feasibility assessment, business plan development, business financial and technical consultation as well as business augmentation support. While self-employment is not for everyone, for those who have an entrepreneurial spirit, ability to analyze markets and make good decisions, and where needed financial stability in order to access financing if that is necessary, this program is one to consider as a source to facilitating an individual from under or unemployment to gainful employment.

C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

Primary barriers that have been identified that relate to the equitable access to and participation of individuals who are blind and visually impaired in the IDB VR program and the IDB Supported Employment Services Program include transportation, technology, and availability. The Department for the Blind is reviewing current staffing levels in efforts to increase the presence of the Iowa Department for the Blind in local communities. We plan to have an eighth VR counselor in the field by the end of the year. In addition, we have domiciled an additional two employment specialists in areas that do not currently have a VR team member domiciled. The Department has been strategically domiciling positions throughout the state, to increase our presence and availability of staff to provide and coordinate VR services. IDB Vocational Rehabilitation clients have historically not used the one-stop centers due to inaccessibility of technology and programs. The programs identified as inaccessible were computer training, resume writing, and assessments to assist in determining skill level and career options. Technology used in the one-stop centers was not accessible to persons needing magnification or screen reading software. Staff would provide reader service in some locations; however, this minimized an individual's ability to be independent in their job search. Community partners have indicated a lack of knowledge on how to assist individuals in accessing services. One-stop center staff have shared that they needed training on how to provide services specific to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with most significant disabilities (cognitive disabilities, mental illness, physical disabilities, deaf-blindness). The Department is working with our local one-stop partners and other training providers, in addition to employers and community service providers to increase access to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. IDB has been conducting accessibility consultations with a variety of these entities to assist them in becoming more accessible. IDB also provides technical assistance, training and resources to these entities. IDB plans to refer to our workforce and other partners more as we move forward in improving the delivery of VR services. Transportation was identified as the primary need for individuals who are blind or visually impaired in Iowa. The regional transit systems are not available in every area, have limited availability, and are expensive. The lack of transportation services creates a dependence on others and is a major cause of concern for the participants whose goal is to be independent in their community. The Department is working with local agencies to identify transportation options. The Department is also working to develop trainings that can be conducted through technology such as webinars. IDB does often meet with clients in their home due to transportation barriers. When these barriers are addressed, rehabilitation teachers are also introduced to the client to assist them in learning alternative techniques related to orientation and mobility and methods for accessing transportation. IDB will continue to assist clients in addressing their transportation needs and in discovering methods of overcoming that barrier to accessing VR services. Finally, IDB has experienced a number of changes in our staff over the last few years. We are continuously assessing the need for additional training regarding WIOA requirements, delivery of services, understanding of supported employment services, and increased levels of partnerships and agreements with our partners. The need for additional training in the delivery of services to individuals with the most significant needs has also been identified by staff and we are working with community partners to provide additional training to our staff. In doing this, we have found new opportunity to provide cross-training to various community partners as well, increasing not only ability for our partners to serve clients, but a greater awareness of the needs of individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

The Iowa Department for the Blind is reviewing the goals established for the FY 2016 State plan. The Department is transitioning to goals and strategies that will align with the Unified State Plan goals. The below goals were approved for the FY 2015 State Plan.

VR Goal 1: All blind and visually impaired Iowans who require Vocational Rehabilitation services to obtain or retain employment receive them. Strategy: Continue utilizing the long-range marketing and outreach plan developed in 2009 to increase awareness of and referrals to the Department. Measure: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward the goal: • Number of Referrals Compared to Previous Year. • Percentage of New Referrals to Re-referrals. • Percentage of Referrals Aged 14 to 64. • Number of Applications Compared to Previous Year.

Results: In PY 2015, this number went down to 836. In PY 2016 the number of referrals was at 594. The Department identified that there were several internal methods used to refer a client to VR services. The Department has changed this practice and is no longer counting all library patrons as referrals to the VR program; this has caused the referral number to decrease over the past year and this number will continue to be watched. Approximately 30% of referrals to the agency in PY2016 were individuals who had been listed in the case management or library system prior. Approximately 92% of referrals were of individuals between the ages of 14 and 64. In PY 2016 the Department VR program took 197 applications and in the previous year took 202 applications

The Iowa Department for the Blind hosts a number of annual events that provide information about services offered by the Department each year. These events include the annual Braille Challenge, the legislative open house, and White Cane Safety Day events. The Department emphasizes the vocational rehabilitation program and the youth transition programs at each event, ensuring individuals are aware of the importance of early involvement in vocational rehabilitation services and the programs offered through the Department.

The Department continued to conduct a number of outreach events throughout the state, with staff presenting information about IDB services. Events such as the vision loss resource fairs, participation in transition fairs and events, and corporate and local government fairs and resource fairs have provided an opportunity for IDB staff to share a wide array of information about services. At all of these events, feedback is sought from attendees for follow-up and possible referrals. Department staff continues to welcome potential clients, interested professionals, and the general public to the IDB for tours that highlight available services.

VR Goal 2: All blind and visually impaired transition age youth and young adults experience employment outcomes that are commensurate with those of older blind and visually impaired Iowans.

Strategy: Utilize part-time employment placements as performance measures for Youth VR Counselors and provide Job Seeking seminars designed specifically for clients attending post-secondary school. Measure: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward the goal: • Percentage of individuals aged 14-24 at application who close successfully employed after services. • Number of transition age youth and young adults placed in part-time employment for the purposes of obtaining work experience. (In these instances, the case will remain open until the employment goal has been achieved.)

Results: Forty-three percent of individuals who were between the ages of 14 and 24 at application successfully closed their cases in PY 2016. Of those individuals who successfully closed their cases, seventy-four percent had been placed in part-time employment for the purpose of work experience. The Department has set a goal that all clients have paid work experiences prior to graduation. In PY 2016, 75% of students graduated from high school with paid work experiences. One of the reasons for not meeting this goal is due to late application for vocational rehabilitation services. Another reason is due to parent or family member preference that the student not pursue employment during high-school and rather focus on education requirements.

Counselors work with schools and the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired to refer students at an earlier age so that career exploration, work experiences, work readiness skills, independence skills and advocacy skills can be developed prior to exit from secondary schools. Outreach and trainings to parents, schools and educators are being developed to work toward this goal.

VR Goal 3: All blind and visually impaired Iowans achieve the highest quality of employment outcome that is commensurate with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Strategy 1: Provide a longer period for job stabilization before closure in cases where a client is working toward achieving more hours, and require additional documentation for cases closing in employment at less than twenty hours per week. Strategy 2: Ensure all clients receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income have the opportunity to receive individualized benefits counseling from a certified Benefits Planner.

Measures: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward the goal: • Percentage of Full-time Closures (32 Hours or more per week). • Average Hours Worked per Week at Closure. • Average Hourly Wages at Closure. • Percentage of SSI & SSDI beneficiaries receiving benefits planning services. Results:

In FY 2016, 58% of clients successfully closing their cases were working 32 or more hours per week. The average hours worked per week at the time of closure was approximately 32 hours. Average wage was \$14.88 per hour. The following is data from FY 2015: Twenty-eight percent of clients who were SSI and SSDI beneficiaries received benefits counseling services. Twenty-six percent of clients worked less than 20 hours per week; of those, 64% reported more than one disability and 36% were individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Counselors and other department staff have identified a need for increased training and education in working with persons with multiple disabilities; in particular persons with cognitive disabilities, mental illness, and brain injuries. Counselors are also working to identify community providers who are competent in working with persons who are blind and visually impaired, including individuals with the most significant disabilities.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Refer to previous section.

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

SE Goal: All blind and visually impaired Iowans who require supported employment services to obtain or retain competitive employment receive them.

Strategy: Research new procedures for managing supported employment cases and develop strategic plan for supported employment services.

Measures: The following measures will be used to gauge progress toward this goal: • Number of closed individuals who had supported employment services on their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). • Percentage of individuals who close successfully employed after receiving supported employment services • Percentage individuals with identified secondary disabilities who close successfully employed after services. Results: In fiscal year 2015, five individuals who received supported employment services closed their cases. Of these individuals, four were closed successfully employed after receiving services. These individuals worked 20 hours or less; employment was in integrated competitive employment settings. Forty-nine percent of cases closing successfully employed after services reported having secondary and tertiary disabilities. Counselors have developed a work group that is developing strategies to identify individuals with secondary and tertiary disabilities who may require supported employment. The number of individuals receiving supported employment services has grown over the last year and counselors will continue to find ways to ensure clients who can benefit from these services receive them.

The following table shows the Department's performance on the Standards and Indicators for the last five years. Performance Indicator RSA Standard FFY 11 Outcome FFY 12 Outcome FFY 13 Outcome FFY 14 Outcome FFY 15 Outcome 1.1: Number of Individuals with Employment Outcomes Equal or exceed 77 82 99 84 101 1.2: Individuals Receiving Services under an Individualized Plan for Employment and Percentage with an Employment Outcome 68.9% 77.67% 78.71% 77.68% 70.59% 76.5% 1.3: Competitive Employment Outcomes as a Percentage of all Employment Outcomes 35.4% 90.00% 87.42% 86.74% 85.71% 85.15% 1.4: Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities as a Percentage of all Individuals with Significant Disabilities 89% 100% 100% 100% 100% 100% 1.5: Ratio of Average VR Wage to State Wage as a Percentage 59% 80.30% 87.70% 85.90% 86.33% 82.45% Average Hourly Rate \$14.56 \$18.81 \$15.04 \$17.05 \$16.28 1.6: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Outcomes Reporting Own Income as Primary Source of Support at Application and Closure 30.4% 17.36% 26.62% 31.21% 32.43% 35.22% 2.1: Access to Services for Minorities: The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds. .80 .823 1.109 .95 .86 .659 The Department routinely performs well on the Standards and Indicators. However, the Department did not meet Indicator 2.1 in FFY 2015. The

Department will be reviewing and implementing strategies to ensure that outreach to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds is done in efforts to serve these individuals.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

The Department did not meet Indicator 2.1 in 2015. The Department does not typically close more than 100 cases per year, thus are not often measured by this indicator. The Department will be reviewing and implementing strategies to ensure that outreach to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds is done in efforts to serve these individuals. IDB has also investigated the use of state contracts and other businesses to provide language services to individuals with limited English speaking abilities. The Department recognizes that individuals with minority backgrounds often enter VR services through regional Workforce Centers or community agencies that specialize in serving people who do not have English as their primary language. To address this difference, the Department will improve outreach to IWD regional centers and the Adult Basic Education programs that provide English as a second language training.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

This plan is filed at a transitional period for standards and indicators in vocational evaluation; the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA have not been determined.

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

The Department will utilize the following strategies in the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve VR services to blind and visually impaired Iowans under the State Plan and for the support of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Statewide Independent Living Council. Pursuant to the existing state plan for independent living the Department allocated \$7,799 from title I funds and \$9,123 from part B funds in FY 2015. The purpose of the SILC is to strengthen the voice of Iowans with disabilities on issues affecting their lives, to build a statewide network of centers for independent living, and to collaborate with our partners in advancing the independence, productivity, and full inclusion of Iowans with disabilities. The Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is an independent nonprofit corporation whose Council Members are appointed by the Governor, and a majority of whom are persons with disabilities. Under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the SILC has the responsibility to plan for the coordination and expansion of independent living services in Iowa, and to promote the development of a statewide network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Centers for Independent Living and the Department work in collaboration in many ways. Collaborate in many ways to include heading up system change; that is help to organize people with disabilities to demand their civil rights, and fight against discrimination. Many of the freedoms and physical accommodations that people with and without disabilities enjoy today would not otherwise exist such as curb cuts, lifts on buses, elevators at metro transit stations, the passage of 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. At the Department, they work in collaboration with us when we host Vision Loss Resource Fairs, they help to get information out regarding our Community-Based Trainings, and they refer individuals with severe vision loss or who are blind. Overall, we collaborate to promote advocacy, independent living, and changing systems that negatively impact people with any kind of disability. Iowa Self Employment (ISE)

Program for Persons with Disabilities. The Iowa Self Employment program for Persons with Disabilities is a collaborative effort between IVRS and the Department. In fiscal year 2015, \$27,652 was used to support individuals in self-employment through this program. The Iowa Self-Employment program exists to provide quality, expert, client-centered services to Iowans with disabilities that embrace diversity, promote successful business ownership and result in self-sufficiency and economic development. This program partners with the Iowa Department for the Blind and its clients to offer entrepreneurial assessment, market feasibility assessment, business plan development, business financial and technical consultation as well as business augmentation support. While self-employment is not for everyone, for those who have an entrepreneurial spirit, ability to analyze markets and make good decisions, and where needed financial stability in order to access financing if that is necessary, this program is one to consider as a source to facilitating an individual from under or unemployment to gainful employment.

q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Department provides supported employment services to an eligible individual with a most significant disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, for whom competitive and integrated employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive and integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability. Supported employment is competitive employment in an integrated setting consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The eligible individual, the counselor, and when appropriate, other extended service providers will jointly plan supported employment services. Extended supported employment services shall be provided by other agencies, organizations, employers, or other available sources with whom cooperative arrangements will be made. Comparable services and benefits will be used to the maximum extent appropriate. Services will be provided in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the individual's informed choice. Supported employment services may include: • An assessment of the need for supported employment; • The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site; • Job development and placement • Social skills training; • Regular observation or supervision of the individual • Follow-up services including regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement; • Facilitation of natural supports at the work site; and, • Any other service necessary to achieve an employment outcome. These services will be provided for a period of time that will not exceed twenty-four (24) months, except for special circumstances when the counselor and the eligible individual jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment. Extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities can be provided for up to 4 years or until an individual turns 25, whichever comes first. Vocational rehabilitation counselors and their supervisor closely monitor the quality of services throughout the duration of their provision to insure that services are

appropriate, timely, cost-effective, and of the same quality as those services provided under Title I.

Youth with most significant disabilities work with the vocational rehabilitation counselor and other identified supports and providers to determine the appropriate timing to transition the youth to extended services. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors work with their clients and others identified to develop the Individual Plan for Employment. Counselors work to provide training to community rehabilitation providers throughout the state to ensure those providing extended supports maintain high expectations for our clients and have the knowledge and training they need to successfully support a youth with MSD. VR counselors are working to identify and find solutions in areas of the state where there is limited access to long-term supports.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

Refer to previous section.

Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Name of designated State agency **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Keri Lynn Osterhaus**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Vocational Rehabilitation Program Administrator**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

Footnotes

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Emily A. Wharton**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Iowa Department for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Emily A. Wharton**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(A) is an independent State commission**

c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.

d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).

e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **Yes**

f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **Yes**

g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.

j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.

k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.

m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above **Yes**

d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,

i. has developed and will implement,

- A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and**
- B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and**

ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:

a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for

individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that:

- i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act**
- ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State

VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the two years of the plan. States will only have one year of data available under the performance accountability system in Section 116 of the WIOA; therefore, the Departments will continue to use the transition authority under WIOA sec. 503(a) to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators in the first plan submission. A “baseline” indicator is one for which States will not propose an expected level of performance in the plan submission and will not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance. “Baseline” indicators will not be used in the end of the year performance calculations and will not be used to determine failure to achieve adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The selection of primary indicators for the designation as a baseline indicator is made based on the likelihood of a state having adequate data on which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance and such a designation will vary across core programs.

States are expected to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline”. The actual performance data reported by States for indicators designated as “baseline” in the first two years of the Unified or Combined Plan will serve as baseline data in future years.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for each indicator, except for those indicators that are listed as “baseline” indicators below.

For this Plan, the Departments will work with States during the negotiation process to establish the negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs.

Baseline Indicators for the First Two Years of the Plan

Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth):

- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Title II programs (Adult Education):

- Employment in the 2nd quarter
- Employment in the 4th quarter
- Median Earnings
- Credential Attainment
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Title III programs (Wagner-Peyser):

- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Title IV programs (Vocational Rehabilitation):

- Employment in the 2nd quarter
- Employment in the 4th quarter
- Median Earnings
- Credential Attainment
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

States may identify additional indicators in the State plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the State indicators. Please identify any such State indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	68.50	72.00	68.70	72.00
Dislocated Workers	69.00	73.00	70.00	73.00
Youth	71.00	71.00	72.00	72.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	70.00	70.00	71.00	71.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 1

Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	64.00	70.00	64.00	70.00
Dislocated Workers	67.00	71.00	67.50	71.00

Youth	66.00	71.00	67.00	71.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	64.00	65.00	64.00	65.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 2

Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	4,200.00	4,900.00	4,300.00	4,900.00
Dislocated Workers	5,700.00	6,100.00	5,750.00	6,100.00
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	5,000.00	5,500.00	5,100.00	5,500.00

Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
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User remarks on Table 3

Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	66.00	66.00	67.00	67.00
Dislocated Workers	66.00	66.00	67.00	67.00
Youth	58.50	58.50	59.00	59.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 4

Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	45.00	45.00	46.00	46.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 5

OCTAE negotiations are complete

Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Measure	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Line 1 (enter the measure information in the comments below)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

Line 2	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 3	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 4	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 5	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 6	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 6

Table 7. Additional Indicators of Performance

Measure	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Employment 2nd Quarter	40.00		41.00	
Employment 4th Quarter	50.00		51.00	
Median Earnings 4th Quarter	4,100.00		4,200.00	
Credential Attainment	20.00		21.00	

Measurable Skill	20.00	21.00
Gains		

User remarks on Table 7

Appendix 2. Other State Attachments (Optional)

Appendix 2: Organizational Charts for Core Partners

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/documents/Organizational%20Charts%202015.03.pdf>